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CONTENTS

06 **F*CK YOU, PAY ME**
The Hustle of a Financial Dominatrix

08 **UP IN SMOKE**
Playing a stoner sent these actors' careers sky-high

12 **PICTORIAL**
KHLOE DASH

20 **HOW DOES AN ESCORT FIND A BOYFRIEND?**
Hint: It's Not Easy

30 **BDSM**
Finding enlightenment in the dark!

40 **ON THE COVER**
LILY ASPEN

50 **PBI: CHARLES EVERS**
Mayor of Fayette and first black candidate in Mississippi

66 **PICTORIAL**
AMBER NICOLE

74 **PLAYBOY ADVISOR**
How to unlock the pleasure of the prostate

80 **CHEATING DURING COVID**
Has the definition changed?

86 **PICTORIAL**
CLARA

94 **ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT**
Community Justice Exchange

ON THE COVER
DLILY ASPEN
Photography by Mila Zvereva
No 41 | **May 2021**

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F*CK YOU, PAY ME

Playboy talks to several financial dommes on the challenges and triumphs of draining bank accounts for a living

BY **JADE GOMEZ** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **GRACHIKOVA LARISA**

It's not exactly news that porn viewership has surged in the pandemic. When a country is gripped by uncertainty and isolation, the simple pleasure of jerking off can seem like all that's left. When you couple that with soaring unemployment and a nosedive in disposable income, of course people will look to sustain their sexual desires on a small budget—a.k.a. the free porn from tube sites or affordable subscriptions to OnlyFans pages. But what happens if blowing your budget is your kink?

Goddess Alexis's days don't usually start until lunchtime and end at three in the morning. Before her bedtime, a submissive contacted her to meet up. He arrived in a Tesla sporting a ski mask and handed off $500 in cash. A few hours later, he returned with another $500. The Los Angeles–based financial dominatrix recounts this as a normal day; sometimes she wakes up to hundreds of dollars in tributes across her various payment methods. She also has a video on her Twitter page of a man crawling on all fours, kissing and licking her shoes, with over 11,000 views. At one point, she kicks him in the face.

In another video that went viral, Southern financial dominatrix Mistress Marley is seen walking an older white man on a leash during North Carolina Central University's homecoming event. The video, captioned with "she brought her sugar daddy to homecoming" and laugh emojis, has over 3 million views. Marley was quick to refute that characterization. "That's not my sugar daddy, it's my sub lol he pays for me to control him," she replied—not expecting the onslaught of praise from hundreds of people. This interaction, like all the others mentioned in this piece, is consensual.

The sex industry is easy enough to enter, and the increased popularity of OnlyFans in the past year has made even the most inexperienced person a bona fide adult star with nothing but a smartphone. Although still relatively obscure, financial domination being seen as an easy payday has led to an influx of newcomers diving headfirst into an industry that is far more complicated.

Goddess Jaim, a 21-year-old full-time financial dominatrix, was struggling to make ends meet. In addition to going to school full-time for forensic science, Jaim worked nights as an Uber driver from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. After Uber updated its policy for how old a driver's car can be, she was left without a job. "I literally searched online for 'ways to make money'," Jaim says with a giggle. "And then I came across findom."

After a failed stint as a sugar baby, financial domination seemed much more aligned with Jaim's personality. She initially started as a catfish dominatrix, a subset of the fetish that is not as profitable but less of a privacy concern. Catfish dominatrixes create social media profiles posing as celebrities like Gigi Hadid or Kylie Jenner, or use photos of Instagram models while making it clear that they are not who they appear to be. The thrill of being scammed, as well as no expectation of loyalty beyond a transaction, makes it appealing for submissives of the fetish, but Jaim was dissatisfied.

Within a few weeks, she had scrubbed her catfish persona in favor of her actual photos. Within four months, Jaim was netting between $2,500 and $5,000 a month.

It hasn't always been this easy to find communities and resources to get into this specific subset of domination. For Taylor Knight, it just fell into her lap.

At 18, Knight took an acting gig as a "decoy" on Maury. The premise was simple: When couples with a cheating boyfriend or husband would attend the show, Knight would be placed with them to see if they'd flirt with her. Most did, and the footage would be played back for the audience and their displeased girlfriends. Due to her self-described "bratty" attitude, Knight began receiving fan mail at the studio, ranging from flowers and gifts to hundreds of dollars in cash.

This was the early 2000s, and paid subscription sites for solo performers were more common. Knight capitalized on that. Using a monthly subscription model that allowed access to her wish list, payment information and a weekly cam show, she found herself making thousands without ever getting naked. "I even had homework slaves on there, so I never had to do homework for school,"

"It started to do well very quickly. By the third or fourth month I was making $12,000 a month."

Knight recalls. "It started to do well very quickly. By the third or fourth month I was making $12,000 a month."

Nearly 15 years later, Knight easily makes over six figures through the dedicated fanbase she curated almost entirely by accident.

For dommes like Goddess Alexis, findom was a way to navigate sex work in a much more comfortable way. After getting into sex work through a premium Snapchat and OnlyFans in late 2019 as a way to earn extra money to attend a rave, she recognized the underlying nature of the interactions with her primarily male clientele.

"I realized I do identify as queer, and I'm mostly attracted to women," she

says. "I had a problem being mean to men because I wanted them to give me the money, and I'd give them the content. I wanted it to be transactional."

After this discovery, Alexis' findom career has become mutually pleasurable for both her and her subs. She considers herself a safe space for her subs to explore their kinks, no matter how extreme. Typical sessions include cosplaying as a character on Skype, blackmail sessions in which subs provide their own embarrassing photos or information and even in-person meet-ups that involve public humiliation.

Despite her conservative Southern upbringing—her parents kicked her out at age 18 when she refused to stop dating girls—Alexis vowed to keep an open and sympathetic mind toward her subs, even if she engages in consensual torture. "I am very big on believing that people are good and wanting to think that everyone deserves love and acceptance because that's what I want in return," she explains. "I'm open to giving a sub a safe space to try those kinks out. I think that's a cool thing that helps them come back."

"I even had homework slaves on there, so I never had to do homework for school."

Despite Covid-19 leaving many people uncertain about their financial futures, Alexis has been able to earn as much as $15,000 in a single month from OnlyFans subscriptions, initial tributes, cash meets and virtual drain sessions. With this success comes the privilege to take a step back from work, which Alexis did after the tragic killing of George Floyd.

The Black Lives Matter movement has pushed for people to support Black-owned businesses and other projects, and it has carried over into the sex industry. Black sex workers have always been the most vulnerable demographic in the scene, because the criminalization of sex work goes hand in hand with the over-policing of Black people and their communities.

As Prostitution in New York City: Answers to Some Questions, a research paper published in 1977 by New York Women in Criminal Justice, notes: "There is little hard information on the ethnicity, birthplace or income of New York City prostitutes. Data from police records, although useful, describe only those women who have been arrested; these are disproportionately non-white. Racial and economic discrimination enter into the prostitution picture: White women are more likely to become call girls, and they are less likely to work the heavily policed Times Square area."

The inherent racism built into work environments extends into the sex industry even more, as Black and Brown women are both hypersexualized and penalized for their sexuality. It's why aesthetics associated with Black women, such as elaborate nails, hair and jewelry, are commodified as mainstream fashion on non-Black women but Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion were shamed for the lyrical content and music video of their recent song "WAP."

For 33-year-old King Kourt, being a Black domme was at first disheartening. "You look at people I started with at the same time, and it seemed like they were making money very fast compared to me," she notes. For Kourt, findom is a side hustle that she engages in apart from her full-time job in the medical field. She calls it "black female supremacy" as a means of taking ownership of her sexuality.

"I'm a plus-size black woman," Kourt says. "Of course, I'm probably fetishized. The fact that I put a price tag on it felt right for me."

With the help of Black Domme Sorority, a support system founded by Mistress Marley, Kourt found a tight-knit group of fellow Black women navigating a primarily white industry. Much like other domme groups, members promote each other's content, vent their frustrations and receive mentorship from more experienced dommes. In an industry that anyone can join in a few simple clicks, that intimate mentorship can provide a world of a difference, especially with the shared experience of marginalization.

Mistress Marley isn't the only one who holds classes for dommes. There is an entire market for this sort of education. Experienced dommes such as Knight and Prague-based Lucky DeVille capitalize on this through virtual classes, e-books and personal mentoring as a way to guide newer talent through the ins and outs of growing a brand. DeVille's website, FinDom101, explores not only the growth of a personal brand, but also the ethics that come with engaging in such a grey area of kink.

SESTA/FOSTA, two bills signed into law by President Donald Trump in 2018, were supposedly designed to fight online sex trafficking. What they actually do is persecute sex workers and make them less safe. The bills allow internet platforms on which sexual activity is discussed to be heavily censored and, in some cases, held liable even if illegal activity does not occur. Combined with other anti–sex work rules and regulations put in place both online and in real life, something as simple as receiving payments from online processors can be frozen if it's suspected to be related to sexual content and activity.

Dommes such as Alexis and Knight take extra precautions with lawyers to ensure they are protected, whether it's by creating contracts with subs or making sure certain activities and transactions aren't legal risks. In particular, blackmail kink can be dangerous for many dommes, as subs can later sue for something they initially requested. As a result, many dommes will not engage in it.

Although there are countless resources for

"They will drain their whole bank account for you if you let them. Personally, I couldn't do that with a clear conscience because I'd be ruining their lives."

dommes, there are not nearly as many for submissives RJ runs the Findom Club, a resource for both dommes and subs who want to get started in the fetish RJ has been in the scene longer than most, having stumbled upon findom by chance in an AOL chat room in the 1990s. After engaging in an argument with a young man, RJ received threats from the man saying he knew where RJ lived and would hurt him unless he mailed him his printer and other valuables RJ found himself at the post office sending everything from his printer to his CD player The threats were empty, but RJ found a fetish he has now been engaged in for over 25 years.

On the Findom Club website, RJ has compiled his decades of experience, making sure to advocate for subs' mental health and safety. "Part of the challenge is there are people with some serious mental health issues that are victims of their fetish," he says as he scrolls through an exhaustive survey used to gather information on the community In the Controlling/Quitting section of his website, there is a chart for subs to use to evaluate their dependence on the fetish It emphasizes balancing real-life friendships with the kink, setting budgets and taking breaks. Sometimes, however, that responsibility is not recognized by the submissive

"So many subs will take out loans for you. They will drain their whole bank account for you if you let them," Jaim warns. "Personally, I couldn't do that with a clear conscience because I'd be ruining their lives " Most dommes are of a similar mindset, emphasizing the personal responsibility to keep subs' mental and financial health in check so subs can come back for more

Kourt recalls a fantasy in which a sub wanted her to lock him up in chastity belt and throw away the key "That's hot, but in reality I'll put the key in my back pocket," she says with a laugh

Khloe DASH

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Photography by **Chrissy Littlefair | @littlefairphotography_**
MUA **Abby-Leigh | @makeupbyabbyleigh**
PR by **LSA Management | @leo.alderman @lsapublications**

Such an honour to have a gorgeous and talented beauty feature! We're curious to know how your journey has been as one of the most respected models in your industry. I've done a lot of work with Babestation, I still do now and then so its great if you want to speak to me personally

Given your obvious stunning good looks and striking features, tell us a bit about where you're from? My mums british but my dad was adopted as a baby so we don't really know anything from his side, its quite mysterious though... I like it that way

Tell us something surprising about you? I'm a beer pong champion, amongst my friends anyway

2020 was an incredibly challenging for all us, what would say has been the most challenging thing for you thus far? Not being able to see family or hug people, I'm a big hugger!

What are some of the things you like to do, behind the cameras and all the glitz and glamour? I love going on little adventures, especially if we stumble across a nice country pub haha

If we were to try and sweep you right off your feet, what are some of the things you look for in an ideal partner? You need to have a great sense of humour and good manners, that goes really far with me

And what would make you go running in the opposite direction as fast as possible? Liars, long nails and bad personal hygiene, yuck!

You're a seemingly talented lady, what are some, if any, of your hidden talents not many people know about? I use to be a hairdresser, I still cut and colour family and friends hair

What makes you feel sexy? A fresh tan and a new lingerie set does the trick

If you could have any superpower in the world, what would it be and why? To be invisible, that would be pretty cool I think

What can we expect from you this year? Any major plans and exciting things we can look forward to from you? Hopefully you'll be seeing a lot more of me, I've got a few projects I'm working on but nothing I can disclose yet unfortunately

It has been a true pleasure getting to know you! Any final words for our readers out there? Thank you so much for having me! Keep you eyes peeled for me in more exciting things to come!

How Does an Escort Find a Boyfriend?

Hint: It's Not Easy

What's an escort to do when a potential romantic partner can't recognize that a blow job is just a job? A year in the lives of high-end escorts as they navigate the snaking line between work and love

It was a balmy August night in New York City and Maggie couldn't

features a preternaturally youthful 2-year-old Maggie waved. He smiled. As they set off to grab a drink, the chemistry was as immediate and intense as it had been on the phone for the past week. When they got to the wine bar, he opened the door for her, wiped down the table. Compared to her last relationship — two months with a self-absorbed photographer — Rich was a thrilling breath of fresh air.

came a high-end provider, a.k.a. an escort, a sex worker — someone

flights to exotic locations and cash — lots of cash — the life of a pro-

culture story lines

saved, or she dies on the block."

some sort of relationship.

than anyone else.

well aware of the challenge.

self for the ensuing battle.

So how do high-end providers meet potential paramours? No differently than most single people these days: dating apps like Bumble, Tinder, OkCupid and Hinge (where Maggie matched with Rich). The process, however, can be tricky. For obvious legal reasons, providers rarely reveal what they do for work on a dating profile. And since the apps are relatively sparse on personal information, escorts have to navigate around men who might react poorly to their profession. Red flags range from conservative politics to pictures from church functions to anyone who appears too buttoned up. Photos from Burning Man, kink pics and other progressive-alternative signals are encouraging. The most reliable app appears to be OkCupid, where members customarily provide more in-depth profiles.

"You can post questions related to sex work and get lots of good information," says Krista, a 27-year-old provider. "You can know ahead of time if they might be hostile or unpleasant about it."

Being a provider who's also a woman of color can lend another level of awareness to the process of vetting potential partners. "You have this double consciousness," says Bre. "I know that black women are hypersexualized, how does that work when you want to form a relationship with someone where you want to be your full self, but you also don't want that full self to be misrepresented or misinterpreted?" Then add on the difficulty of being a sex worker, where, by virtue of the job, you are commodifying your sexuality. It's this really weird space where you're having a conversation with a partner and is he misogynistic and racist?"

Once they've waded into the dating pool, the next step is like diving headfirst into the deep end. Time for

"I've tried everything. I've been blunt, I've been delicate. I've asked if they've seen 'Pretty Woman'."

"the talk." Coming clean with what they do for a living. "I couldn't have someone who didn't know what I did," says Sara, a 28-year-old escort. She isn't alone. Some high-end escorts tell those closest to them—friends, family—and this would obviously include a partner.

So it's not as much if they break the news to a potential boyfriend as when. "Definitely not the first date," laughs Maggie. "That's way too much information. But all girls have different comfort levels." Developing those comfort levels can take time; trust needs to build. But waiting too long has pitfalls as well. "I don't want to be one or two months in," she says, "then admit I've lied the whole time and this is what I actually do." With Rich, their instant rapport actually prompted Maggie to tell him over text before their first date.

How then to share this information? Again, every situation and every provider varies. "I've tried everything," explains Sara, who's been a provider for nearly three years. "I've been blunt, I've been delicate. I've asked if they've seen Pretty Woman." With one of her exes, she described herself as a "well-compensated, low-volume companion." Maggie prefers not to beat around the bush. "I say I'm in the sex industry," she says. "Then guys say, 'What does that mean?' I try to explain the job. But I ask, 'Look, how much do you want to know?'"

Rich wanted to know a lot. He wasn't at all like the guy who'd called Maggie a "cum bucket" when she'd told him. Or the guy who said, "You must really know how to fuck a man." Or the guy who screamed, "You're going to give me HIV!" Still, sometimes Rich's inquisitiveness concerned Maggie. Regular inquiries about her clients' dick sizes, asking if she genuinely enjoyed having sex with these men. But they worked through it. Their lives became more and more intertwined. Within a few months Maggie felt "all the bs was gone," and they were building a foundation. She was in love.

Krista met Vic at a party in Brooklyn. They too had instant attraction. Who could blame them? The redheaded Krista grew up in a Southern California suburb, matriculated to an Ivy League college and possessed a fierce passion for politics and feminism. Vic was a tech consultant from South America, sharp and witty—that dry humor Krista adored. She'd felt so comfortable with him that on their first date she told him she was a sex worker.

"He said, 'Okay,'" recalls Krista. They quickly became an item and Vic proved to be warm and emotionally supportive.

What Vic wasn't, was jealous. "He had no curiosity about work," says Krista. "I don't think he saw much use in knowing. My assumption was he thought, I know what sex looks like." Her theory is that certain people—herself included—aren't biologically programmed with sexual jealousy. "You can tell if they are, fast," Krista adds. "They try to hide it, but they still ask questions to scratch that itch."

Someone like Vic is a rare find, because the work is all about sex. Despite the "escort" connotations, Krista isn't simply accompanying some lonely gentleman to the theater and then heading home. She's sleeping with (primarily) older, married, wealthy men. Those bookings might include the theater or dinner at Eleven Madison Park or a week in Tuscany, but regardless of the trappings, the modern day high-end provider is still practicing the world's oldest profession.

But no matter the programming, falling for someone can make the job excruciating. Especially during the "honeymoon" period of a new relationship. Providers talk about the euphoria of that first weekend with a new partner, living in a cloud of dopamine and serotonin, not thinking about eating or drinking, the two of them just lying in bed all day. Inevitably, explains Krista, that e-mail arrives. A job. Krista tried a variety of ways to cope. Sometimes she'd think of Vic while having sex with a client. Other times she completely blocked Vic out of her mind. "I never came up with an optimal way," she admits.

While the providers grudgingly go to work, they all attest that the sex with clients is nothing like it is at home. They use words like performative, robotic and perfunctory to describe "work sex." That's not to say it's bad, especially with clients they like, but it's not real. "I get to have orgasms," says one escort who asked not to be named. "But they're empty." Intimacy with significant others is genuine, connective and, maybe most important, healing.

"But it can get weird," says Bre about having a significant other who knows what she does for a living. Example: "You're super tired, and they're like, 'How was work?' 'Oh, it was great. I pissed in a champagne cup and then this guy drank it.' And they're like, 'Would you want to try that with me?' I'm like, 'No!'"

Which is not to say that sex in their personal lives is boring. Surprisingly, most providers say they're far kinkier with their loved ones than with the men paying them. In addition to partners providing a safer space for experimentation, the real thrill for many clients is the mere idea of an escort. "I'm actually vanilla with my clients," says Suzanne, a 27-year-old escort working toward her MBA. None of her clients ask to explore sexual fantasies with her "because I'm the fantasy. Not the sex acts."

During their first year together, Krista can't remember a single argument with Vic. They fit perfectly; their life together was easy. One night, while they cooked dinner at her apartment, Vic told Krista he loved her. She laughed.

"I was like, 'I've known I've loved you for months.'"

"I don't care how cool he is; for the next 30 years his line at the end of an argument will always be, 'You're a fucking whore.'"

When Josie started escorting three and a half years ago, she looked at it as a refreshing "time out" from the dating scene. The 41-year-old from Montreal loathed the apps and thought the guys in New York City only wanted to get laid. Not only was she able to focus on her health, wellness and meditation practices, but setting up a business as an independent escort required a hell of a lot of trial and error, a process she couldn't exactly google. "There's a lot to figure out that first year," laughs one escort. "You're learning on your feet — and your back." But as Josie got established and developed a steady clientele, she started to sense a common void.

"I wanted that intimacy," she admits. "That partner, that companionship."

Yet Josie was reluctant. Unlike many high-end providers, she didn't want to reveal her identity. Didn't feel comfortable doing it. On dates, she claimed she was divorced or in fitness training or didn't need to work. "People don't really ask questions based on that answer," she says. The covers proved effective, although Josie realized they undermined her entire purpose. "I know I'm going to have to lie to somebody," she says. "And what's the point of dating someone with a prospect of a possible future when you start it with a lie?"

Then, through a social media account — one that used her real identity — she connected with Alan, a TV producer. He lived in Atlanta. She had friends there she regularly visited. One night they met for margaritas in Buckhead, and soon she was flying to Georgia every few weeks. They had long dinners, went to Braves games and both liked trying different things in the bedroom.

Weeks turned into months, yet still Josie didn't disclose her livelihood. Not without good reason. Revealing that information — particularly their work aliases — can throw unsuspecting men for a serious loop.

Take Maggie: Her boyfriend Rich looked up her website, Twitter feed and Instagram account. While Maggie didn't brag about lavish trips and pricey gifts from clients like many high-end providers, she did post racy selfies. She offered a "girlfriend experience" as well as duos with other female escorts. Rich wanted to know why she never sent him any nude selfies, why she didn't act that adventurous when they were together. She tried to explain that social media was all smoke and mirrors. The duos with other escorts came with the job; it wasn't who she was.

"He felt threatened," Maggie recalls. "He felt like I was pretending with him. That it wasn't real."

As if that wasn't incendiary enough, some escorts (including Josie) post client reviews on their websites—detailed accounts of their high-priced assignations. Highly complimentary? Without question. But the lurid play-by-play might send even the least sexually jealous boyfriend into an apoplectic rage.

Sometimes telling the truth can be simply dangerous. Maggie cites an evening when a date she'd recently told came close to assaulting her. Several providers mentioned escorts who'd been outed by angry exes on infamous gossip website the Dirty. Suzanne will never forget the warning she once got from the owner of an escort agency where she once worked.

"He told me, 'Never tell anyone,'" she says. "'Because I don't care how cool he is, for the next 30 years his line at the end of an argument will always be, You're a fucking whore.'"

After eight months commuting to Atlanta, Josie's relationship with Alan came to a head. "At what point am I going to have to tell this person or get out?" laments Josie. "It came to that. I either do or I don't. I didn't."

Josie called Alan and broke it off. She blamed the distance.

For several months, Maggie and Rich sailed smoothly. They traveled to Europe together. She met his brother. But as her feelings deepened, she began to sense a distance in him. A disconnect. When she'd say "I love you," he wouldn't respond. Comments about her job resurfaced, little daggers like, "What do you do all day?" and, "The sex is really bad with your clients, right?" But the red flags turned into a warning siren when Rich had a family wedding. He didn't invite Maggie.

"Why not?" she asked him, holding back tears. "Because you don't see me in your future? Why are you hiding me? Keeping me away?"

Rich's gradual 180 isn't a revelation in provider circles. All the women interviewed for this story have encountered guys who say they don't have a problem dating a sex worker. They mean it too. But it's impossible to really know what it's like, how they will react, until they do it. Good intentions don't qualify as actual understanding. Maggie tells the story of a "lovely young man" she briefly dated. When she told him she was an escort, he smiled and replied that it didn't matter what she does; it only matters what kind of person she is. "I thought that was really sweet," says Maggie. "But it's all well and good to say that before you're shoulders deep in a relationship and mama has to go out and blow someone."

Yet that's precisely what dating an escort requires. Recognizing a blow job as a job and nothing more. "I always say to partners, 'I wish you could do this for one day and understand what it's really like,'" says Maggie. "Before I started I had no idea."

That lack of understanding fosters insecurity. Undermines trust. "And you have to trust your partner completely," insists Sara. "And he has to trust you." If those pieces are missing, boyfriends tend to grow resentful while providers feel more and more guilty.

"I felt guilty all the time about work," explains Maggie. Guilty about last-minute bookings, jobs over the holidays, trips out of town. "And I felt like I had to make up for it."

That means lots of mollycoddling. Constantly reassuring boyfriends that they're special, returning from a two-week tour and having sex with your partner, not because you want to but because you feel obligated. Tolerating behaviors that shouldn't be tolerated. "Rich liked things I wasn't so keen on," admits Maggie. "Like spanking really hard. I'd finally say, 'Don't do that — it hurts!'"

Many providers have not only found themselves in unhealthy relationships, but they've also stayed with those partners because they don't think they

"I always say to partners, 'I wish you could do this for one day and understand what it's really like.'"

can find somebody else who would be as accepting of their profession. "We invest so much in our partner because we know we have a special situation," says Maggie. "And we need to compensate for almost everything that happens." Inevitably, Rich couldn't give Maggie the love and support she needed. That she'd explicitly asked him for. Every day was a whirlwind of emotions, from romantic heartbreak to existential mindfuck. "He made me question my job," says Maggie. "People make you feel bad about it because you're just doing it for the money. And that's seen as dirty, you're a slut, easy. I spoke to a therapist about it and she said to me, 'Do you really want a man who's okay with what you do?'"

"True. That's hard!" agrees Josie. "The feminist in me says yes, but the romantic in me says hell no!"

It's all part of the ongoing battle Maggie had spoken of. Battles that are often lost. Finally, one afternoon, she called Rich from her bed, crying. They couldn't go on like this anymore, she said. The relationship was over. They never saw each other again.

"You can't win," she sighed. "I want someone to accept who I am and where I am at this point. Someone to love me for who I am and not what I do. It doesn't define me. But do you still want a man who's okay with you sleeping with other people?"

In January 2018, after two and a half years together, Krista and Vic found themselves in uncharted, unhappy waters. The surprise? The issues didn't have a direct correlation to sex. Time was the first real issue. Krista began landing more jobs, and she'd specifically changed her marketing to attract longer bookings that took her out of both New York City and the United States for significant stretches. When a client is paying hefty sums for meals, dinners, hotels and time, a provider can't just hop on the phone and start texting people. Especially a boyfriend. Not only is it rude, it's bad for business.

"My last trip was five days," explains Krista. "It's like being on a date. I learned to do a lot of fast texting in the bathroom."

Krista and Vic came up with a solution: After a booking with a client in, say, Paris, Vic would join Krista in France and the pair, flush with Krista's cash, would go carousing through Europe. They had a blast. Yet Vic didn't have the same schedule flexibility, and the travel eventually cost him his sales position.

"My income was going up, and he lost his job. It affected his self-esteem," says Krista. "Then we stopped fucking. He didn't want to. Men feel emasculated when they're not working. But if I don't have sex I'll start to break down."

To make matters worse, as the breadwinner, Krista started giving Vic money. To pay his rent, cover his bills, for some spending cash. The female as breadwinner of the American household isn't by any means a new phenomenon, but it can strain any straight relationship, especially when one of the couple has the unusual mindset of a female sex worker. "I had a problem supporting him," she admits. Not because she didn't love Vic, but because she began feeling like a client. Paying for Vic's company. That in turn made her question the nature of their entire relationship. Was it simply transactional? Was she being played? She started to suspect it was all an act, that Vic was only going through the motions for the money.

After an event one night, Krista came home and confronted Vic.

"I don't know if you love me anymore," she claimed. "And what would you do without me supporting you?"

"That's probably true," admitted Vic.

"Okay. This is over."

Not long after Josie had broken it off with Alan from Atlanta, a man in New York City piqued her interest. He was successful and charming; they had similar interests and fantastic chemistry. The sex was off the charts. Josie had been so at ease during their time together that she'd revealed her real name and talked about her "civilian" life. The catch? He was a client. And he'd repeatedly asked to take her on an off-the-clock date.

That wasn't radical in the realm of high-end providers. Many have dated a client at least once, and some say their closest, most honest relationships are with the regulars who pay them. Take Bre, for example, who couldn't be happier with her current significant other, who is not only a former client but is still married and in an open relationship. These clients provide a safe, albeit transactional, space where an escort can let her hair down without being judged or threatened.

So Josie agreed. They had fabulous sushi, sizzling banter and later went back to her place to have sex. But when he spent the night, it felt like, well, work. "He wouldn't leave," laughs Josie. "By the next afternoon, I'm like, 'I'm tired, get the fuck out.'" She gave off clear signals that she wanted solo time, but he refused to read them — a by-product, she thinks, of her job. "It was what he needed to make it feel like it wasn't a transaction," she says.

The disappointment over her client didn't last. Trying out an exclusive dating app, she connected with Simon. Someone, once again, who didn't live in the same city. For the next few months, they spoke every day. Sometimes for hours. "They were some of the most meaningful, in-depth conversations I've ever had," she recalls. "It gave me intimacy, but not the physical form. Emotional."

Before long, Simon was dropping the L-word. But Josie resisted. The two hadn't even met in person, and Josie hadn't revealed she was a sex worker. Yet, like last time, the deeper she got involved with Simon, the more the duplicity gnawed at her. "I feel great about what I do," she says. "It's the double life that makes me feel shitty. It's a constant struggle in this business."

Revealing the truth can be a scary proposition for a provider, especially when that information has been withheld for a long time. But it can also be liberating; it can help a relationship. Suzanne, the escort getting her MBA, vividly remembers the night she told her casual lover — after two years. "I was absolutely terrified. I was shaking," she says. "He said, 'I feel so much closer to you now that I know this about you.'"

Finally, Josie booked a trip to visit Simon. She planned to see him for a few weeks to ensure their face-to-face connection was as powerful as what they'd been feeling for the past six months. Yet two days before she was scheduled to leave, Josie pulled the plug.

"I'm constantly in a conversation with myself because I want to live an honest life," she says with a tinge of frustration. "But what's my truth? Am I seeking these situations because deep down I don't feel worthy of a real relationship?"

The struggles continue. Since splitting with Rich, Maggie has had a string of disappointing dates. Josie has all but given up on love for now, focusing her energy instead on wellness and traveling abroad. "There aren't really any books on how to date

"My last trip was five days.... I learned to do a lot of fast texting in the bathroom."

a hooker," says Suzanne. But what if the laws changed? What if the sex-work industry were legalized? Would the challenges to finding love remain? Maggie is confident they would.

"I'd feel safer divulging the information to a partner earlier," she says. "But I don't think dating or relationships would be easier. The problem is the patriarchy, regardless of the legalities."

There was, however, one encouraging sign: Krista and Vic, who eventually got a job in the health care industry. "We're back on," she explains. "He's a delightful, beautiful man, and he feels like my partner. I see a future together."

The future. That, too, providers have to consider. Escorts don't intend to be in the business forever, as there is normally a shelf life to the job. Relationships are inevitable. That said, most of the providers interviewed for this story aren't imagining themselves as part of some Norman Rockwell narrative.

"I know for a fact I'll never have a conventional lifestyle," says Maggie.

One of the escorts I spoke with agrees. "Why not go on an hour 'date' once a month?" she replies when asked about continuing to work if she gets married. "Why turn down that money I could put away for savings? I could see myself doing that, but it's kind of hard to gauge now."

Whatever form of relationship they find, what will providers tell their partners of their past lives as sex workers? A few don't intend to say anything. Several envision telling their significant other but underplaying their participation and "leaving out the nitty-gritty," in the words of one provider. Most of them, however, feel like Maggie.

"I would be straightforward," she says. "This is going to be a part of me no matter if it's the present or the past. Whoever I wind up with is going to have to be okay with it."

Some names and minor details have been changed for privacy.

BDSM

finding enlightenment in the dark ...

BY IAN KIRKE

According to Ian Dury in his 1977 hit, co-written with Chaz Jankel, 'Sex and drugs and rock and roll is all my brain and body need. Sex and drugs and rock and roll are very good indeed'. If I were being picky, I would add good food, some cash in my skyrocket and a nice place to live too, but I acknowledge with such attention to detail I would be a crap songwriter. In terms of the sex element, I lost my virginity at nineteen, a relatively slow starter by contemporary standards, and as I recall the earth didn't move for either of us. I made up for the slow start and think I am fairly good at it, although to be honest I have never met another male who had a contrary view. Between you and I, not to be echoed to anyone else, I think my prowess is best summed up by Woody Allen's sage words "I'm such a good lover because I practise a lot on my own."

I am inherently lazy and crave comfort in most personal endeavours. Although I have done some risky things in my life my level of kink has nonetheless remained consistent just above switching the light on. I also don't do pain. Getting into the pool in Tenerife for the first time is usually accompanied by a few howls of anguish. If anyone were tempted to twist my nipples, they would probably follow this up with searching for their teeth on the bedroom carpet. Other than food, drink, and certain medical procedures my orifices aren't for entering, and if any foreign object looms in the vicinity of my posterior my fight or flight response is highly attuned for defensive action. Overall, I would rank my sexual appetite as vanilla with a little sauce of which the latter is totally within my own defined pouring parameters. With this testosterone charged testimonial it was inevitable that my journalistic skills would eventually be challenged by the goading of others who smirk at the sexual exploits of a close pal of Pee-wee Herman and Noddy. So, with my stout boots on, sensible under garments and vest, ensuring that I never left any vents unguarded I turned my investigative skills to the great sexual unknown. BDSM.

Of course I had heard of BDSM, mainly through inane banter with other male friends and had built up a mental image of gas masks, spanking, chains and being led around the lounge on a dog collar. How reliable this perception was would ultimately be put to the test. I must admit to being a tad confused too, especially since my mum's neighbour Dorothy had expressed heartfelt appreciation of the novel Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James, an accomplished author who in my humble opinion looked more like a librarian than a dominatrix. Dot was also in her seventies and liked knitting and jigsaw puzzles. Wrapped around this disorientation was evidence, if one can say that of mainstream media, that BDSM had seen a resurgence during the COVID-19 pandemic. I must admit to having altered my domestic habits somewhat during the successive lockdowns,
although I doubted if binge watching Netflix in my dressing gown and not showering until late afternoon qualified as kink.

With the help of a bunch of charming, trusting, and bubbly BDSM'ers drawn from the connections that form the social media highway of human cyber relations I drew up my list of research questions and listened. Without their collaboration, openness, and sincerity this piece would have lacked any veracity or humanity. Creating some form of instruction manual was never my intention, as quite frankly, I lacked any professional or anecdotal experience.

What is BDSM?

A good place to start since I didn't know, without a Google search, what the acronym stood for. Indeed, I wasn't the only one as it had a variety of definitions.

B - Bondage, D - Discipline/Domination, S - Submission/Sadism (feeling pleasure/sexual excitement by inflicting pain), M - Masochism (feeling pleasure/sexual excitement receiving pain)

Although Mistress Kiba qualified the textbook status by adding, "It generally boils down to a mutually agreed upon power exchange. This can look vastly different in each dynamic and there is not a single 'correct' way of being involved in BDSM. Some people keep BDSM to sex, some live 'the lifestyle' 24/7."

Thinking that I had grasped the parameters I was thrown into confusion when Tracy entered the room and proudly exclaimed, "It really does cover everything from balloon fetishes to ultraviolence." Sam added somewhat rationally, "It's an umbrella term for those practicing kink." Kitchenalia could be kinky too! As I ate my porridge the next morning, spoon in hand my mind wandered

Does it hurt?

Sam commenced with a reassuring salvo. "Not all acts will involve physical pain.

For instance, I get off on humiliation and the psychological." Now I could do that, having years of experience barracking my own players at Notts County! But then again, I don't think this qualified as BDSM as Miriam upped the tempo, "It can hurt, but there's consent and boundaries within each interaction and relationship. Pain play can come into it if that's your thing, but there's so much more than discomfort involved with BDSM. It definitely shouldn't hurt emotionally."

Mistress Kiba broadened the enquiry with a degree of welcome theory. "A dominant/submissive dynamic can have no pain element to it at all. As a dominatrix, I have many clients that I purely dominate online. They may have tasks to complete, rules to abide by, acts of servitude that they get enjoyment out of without even having to be in the same place. It is a myth that all dominants are sadists and all submissives are masochists. If you want it to hurt it can hurt a lot, if you don't want it to it doesn't have to."

I was beginning to realise that BDSM was not a narrow pursuit. This continuum was elegantly summed up by Debbie who said, "Saying I'm into BDSM is like saying I like food. There are so many branches of the community and probably something even the most vanilla person would be curious about."

What was your BDSM journey?

Sam was relatively new to the scene and up until recently had been standing with me in the 'nothing to declare' aisle. "My BDSM journey is a relatively new one. My vanilla relationship had broken down and I had always felt there was something missing. I got to meet a dom in December 2019, after several weeks of online chatting. He planned and discussed every detail from start to finish, what to wear, what to expect, how I would be expected to address him and so on."

Although more experienced, Debbie's gateway to kink had similarities despite her progression being from higher ground. "At 25 I started organising my own private orgies. I was fortunate to find a man who had several trusted friends. I met a businessman in a hotel who ended up using his fist, but not to bang on the table if you know what I mean! This had rather pleasurable results. I liked being controlled."

Miriam added to the narrative and initially I wondered if she knew Dorothy. "I was acutely aware of its existence thanks to that awful set of novels called Fifty Shades of Grey. I read half of the first book and never picked it back up again. As a newly single 19-year-old, I wanted to stretch my legs - I mean wings! - and signed up for an online dating profile. I came across an older man and we matched, started messaging and eventually swapped numbers and hooked up.

We swapped porn videos and explicit messages. Then he took me to a market called the BBB (Birmingham Bizarre Bazaar) where he introduced me to the social side of BDSM."

Mistress Kiba chimed a more cautious tone as she reflected on her voyage of discovery. "I was 18 and was introduced in an unsafe way by people who were taking advantage of my naivety. It seemed fine at the time but now I look back and cringe which is why it's important to wait to get involved when you're a little older and you have people you can trust to guide you."

Tracy added, "I came across it via the internet, realised I was into some of it, and went to one of the big fetish markets to investigate further. I started attending events about eight years ago, and that's really when my social circle grew, and my understanding of different fetishes and the etiquette and expectations of the scene developed. For people looking at getting involved, I'd suggest starting with online social sites to understand more about your kinks. Munches are a good starting point, post COVID restrictions, which are social, non-play events held in vanilla venues, such as pubs or coffee shops."

This all seemed very cordial and, dare I say, British although I couldn't help wondering if falling down the rabbit hole into Wonderland could have some disadvantages, especially in terms of monogamous relationships? Miriam picked up my vibes and sought to manage the opening of Pandora's box in a more practical manner. "For me, BDSM and romantic relationships go hand in hand. I would struggle to have a monogamous romantic relationship without any BDSM based activity. I naturally lean towards polyamory because I feel as humans, we have a complex set of needs in romance, sexual and platonic ways so confining that to just one person feels inherently unfair. I like

Wensleydale cheese as much as I like Cheddar, right? Similar concept with sex and BDSM."

Is it for everyone?

Everyone in the house agreed. BDSM isn't for everyone. None of them metaphorically pushed it down my throat either. Miriam qualified the sentiment by adding, "There's probably something that falls under the umbrella of BDSM that a lot of people will like. Anal sex used to be considered particularly out there and kinky, but it's quite normalised now."

Mistress Kiba reinforced the variety of kink to choose from when she reminded us all of the joy of dressing up. "Getting dressed up as a schoolgirl/boy and having your 'teacher' tell you off is a form of submission." At this point I had a flashback to Mr Piper, my stern mathematics teacher at secondary school. Tracy broke this unhealthy chain of thought when she turned the focus onto fantasy pursuits. "It's not just about wearing latex and leather and being whipped in a dingy club. It could be role play during sex; it could be your long-distance partner telling you exactly what to do when you masturbate on video chat. I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about what BDSM is which is why people think that it isn't for them."

Debbie couldn't hide her craving for the kink. "Impact play is a huge part for me. I love being spanked and caned. I also adore the degradation and humiliation side although only for Sir at his request." Bugger! I was back in front of Mr Piper and couldn't remember what a half times a half actually equated to. Time to move on!

What are the myths and legends?

Debbie was quick to pop the balloon (which I now know I can use for more than just celebrating a birthday) that most of my associates had dreamt up about BDSM. "I guess myths and legends would be images of whips, chains and dungeons. They can be introduced but this would not be a fair representation."

Miriam sighed at the numerous fables. "The one that springs to mind first is
about submissives. They're all meek, shy nerds. Absolutely not the case! I've met submissives who just look like regular people: doctors, nurses, factory workers, shop assistants, mechanics, etc. Your barista at the coffee shop might be a nighttime deviant. Another common misconception is that people into BDSM can't have normal sex, and that it has to get weird and kinky. This is absolutely not true! I've had some really fulfilling, satisfying sex as just two people getting it on."

Mistress Kiba continued to dispel the myths that I was increasingly minded to conclude were being perpetuated by those who knew absolutely nothing about the case in hand (or umbrella, you choose!). We vanillas were holding the smoking gun. "I have clients from all walks of life. Since my time is valuable, I deal with a lot of people who earn a fair amount of money. That respectable CEO business person may be grovelling at my feet after their meeting. There is no one 'type' who are into BDSM. Not everyone in the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex plus) community are into BDSM either."

What role do you best represent?

Sam kicked off with an entry level synopsis. "Roles involved include dom, master/mistress, sub, slave, rope bunny and switch." The need for clarification on these alien terms was forthcoming when it was explained that you can switch from rigger (one who ties) to bunny (the one being tied). She added, "I mostly identify as a brat, a type of sub who enjoys punishment and will play with their dom to even encourage discipline." Debbie nodded enthusiastically in a distinctly impish manner.

Miriam laid her cards on the table, "I will take charge in a group situation to help control someone else on request of a dominant person. Generally, this is referred to as a 'service top', but my preference is to be the submissive, bottom of the food chain if you will." This sudden mention of food made me hungry although I was beginning to wonder if vanilla ice cream would be adequate.

New terminologies, that got me clicking on Google, were introduced by Mistress Kiba. "I am a cis (individuals who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth, not being transgender) femme dominant. I am a sadist but that is reserved for my masochistic subs and I get my kicks from medical play." Tracy continued the penchant for all things related to doctors and nurses although she also expressed a keenness for extreme spanking by virtue of an array of instruments.

What is the best part?

There was a mutual recognition of the care, compassion, and honesty that my BDSM'ers had encountered. This came as something of a surprise, as some of the roles, excluding the balloon play that even I could engage with, static aside, appeared to contradict this assertion. But that's where I almost certainly had it all wrong. Miriam captured the mood by declaring, "For me, it's feeling cared about. Knowing that you have someone who you can talk to about anything and everything and stuff you didn't even think about until it comes up. You are someone."

Any disadvantages?

Debbie, I am sure, knew Dorothy as she immediately, and thankfully, rejected anyone who had read the Fifty Shades of Grey series or seen the films. Tracy was a little more forgiving of my mums near neighbour. "I won't dismiss the 'Fifty Shades' effect as wholly detrimental because I do think it opened doors to people who might not have been brave enough to open them, but I do think it's become a lot more judgemental as people who are less experienced or less knowledgeable come onto the scene. Also, I hate to break it to you but I've yet to meet a billionaire dom with his own private jet. Maybe it's just the company I keep, but they don't seem to be in large supply."

Sam pointed out the risks of inexperience and choosing the wrong partner. "Always be clear what your hard and soft limits are. And if they say there'll be no safe word then that's an immediate red flag!" Mistress Kiba added to this caution. "Everything has it's disadvantages but that's where the community really come into play. There are plenty of people who claim they have experience who haven't which can get people hurt. The co munity are great for education and protection though. We all understand that we didn't get into BDSM knowing everything, we don't look down on anyone for knowing less about something. If you want to learn, just ask."

According to Miriam certain roles have drawbacks too. "Be-

provided by Sam was more than helpful "The golden rule safe, sane and consensual And enjoy it, hang up the guilt and have fun." Tracy added the useful tip of agreeing a 'safe word' or better still utilising the traffic light system: Green, good to go, amber, slow down and red, stop right there!

Debbie likewise offered a reassuring hand of guidance, open palmed rather than clenched in a fist. "If you are considering it don't just jump in Do your research Take time to ensure that partners are fully consenting and comfortable with all situations "

The fun element was vocalised by Miriam who added with a broad smile, "Have fun! Genuinely, BDSM and kink and anything non-vanilla is meant to be fun Even if that includes pain Also, things won't necessarily go right the first-time round and if they don't, try again in a week. Lastly, try everything at least twice You might have just got your technique wrong initially" I started this journey with several preconceived ideas about BDSM and readily admit that I was comprehensively wrong! I met a bunch of people who were happy with their sexuality and were able to express to others, including old vanilla me, their emotions in a manner that was truly remarkable My own sexual roadmap had been heavily suppressed by a narrative of Monty pythonesque 'nudge, nudge, wink, wink, say no more' reflections. Vanilla is just as good as kink, but ignorance is never a substitute for knowledge If I have signposted you to more sunnier uplands, or reassured you that where you are, for the time being, is exactly right then our time together has been worth the effort. But time for me to depart dear reader as Dorothy has her balloons out, and has been shaking her fist at me since I am late. Ooh err missus!

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ing a submissive takes an awful lot of trust, and because of how much trust you need to give it's extremely easy to get hurt."

Mainstream media suggests that there has been a spike in BDSM during COVID. What are your thoughts?

Tracy couldn't hide her excitement. "I think it's brilliant! People are having a go, exploring, and learning " Then added the 'but' (not to be confused with bottom play), "Just make sure that you're doing it safely Things like breath play and even restraints can have catastrophic effects if they go wrong. I know someone who nearly lost a finger because of a rope tie that was too tight for too long "

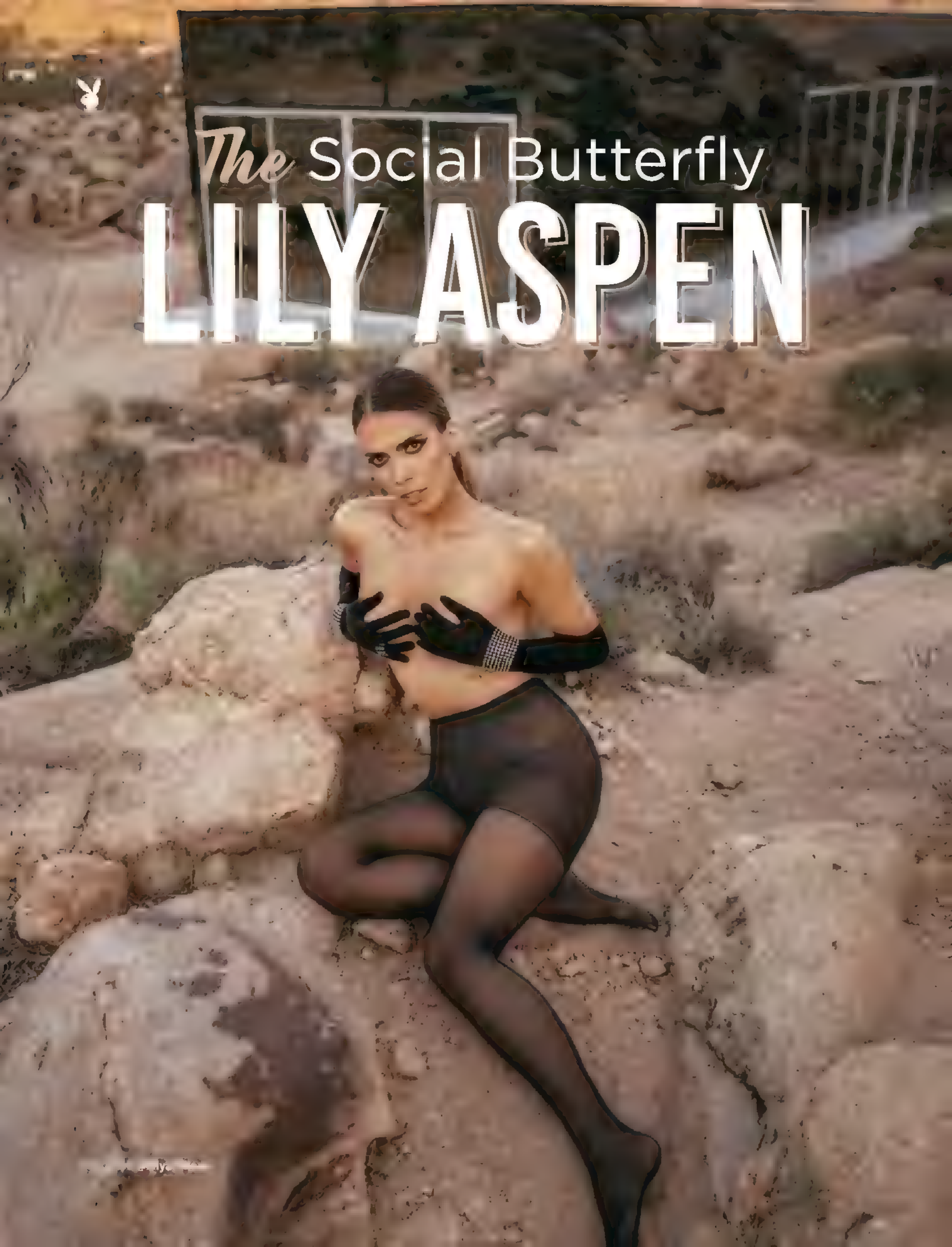
Others recognised that successive lockdowns had increased the notion of 'spicing things up' in the boudoir Mistress Kiba, ever the pragmatist, pointed out, "There are tons of resources online including online classes in just about everything that will help guide you in healthy BDSM practice. FetLife (BDSMfocused social networking website) is a great place to go for information and to learn about classes and talk to like-minded people "

Miriam likened the apparent surge to other natural cravings "Imagine eating the identical meal prepared in the exact same way, every single day You'll get bored after a week, won't you? Same thing for sex and I also think that this might be separate from Covid-19, as women are discovering their sexuality and ability to be sexual and enjoy their own bodies as well as exploring their partners

They've realised there's more to sex than just penis in vagina." As I was digesting this nugget she followed up with a contemporary quip "Even the best suited of partners get bored of talking about their workdays and zoom quizzes." She was right Zoom quizzes were now beginning to suck, although was this a dom or sub trait?

For all the other vanillas out there, is there anything else we need to know?

As a vanilla with honours the reassurance of a simple code of ethics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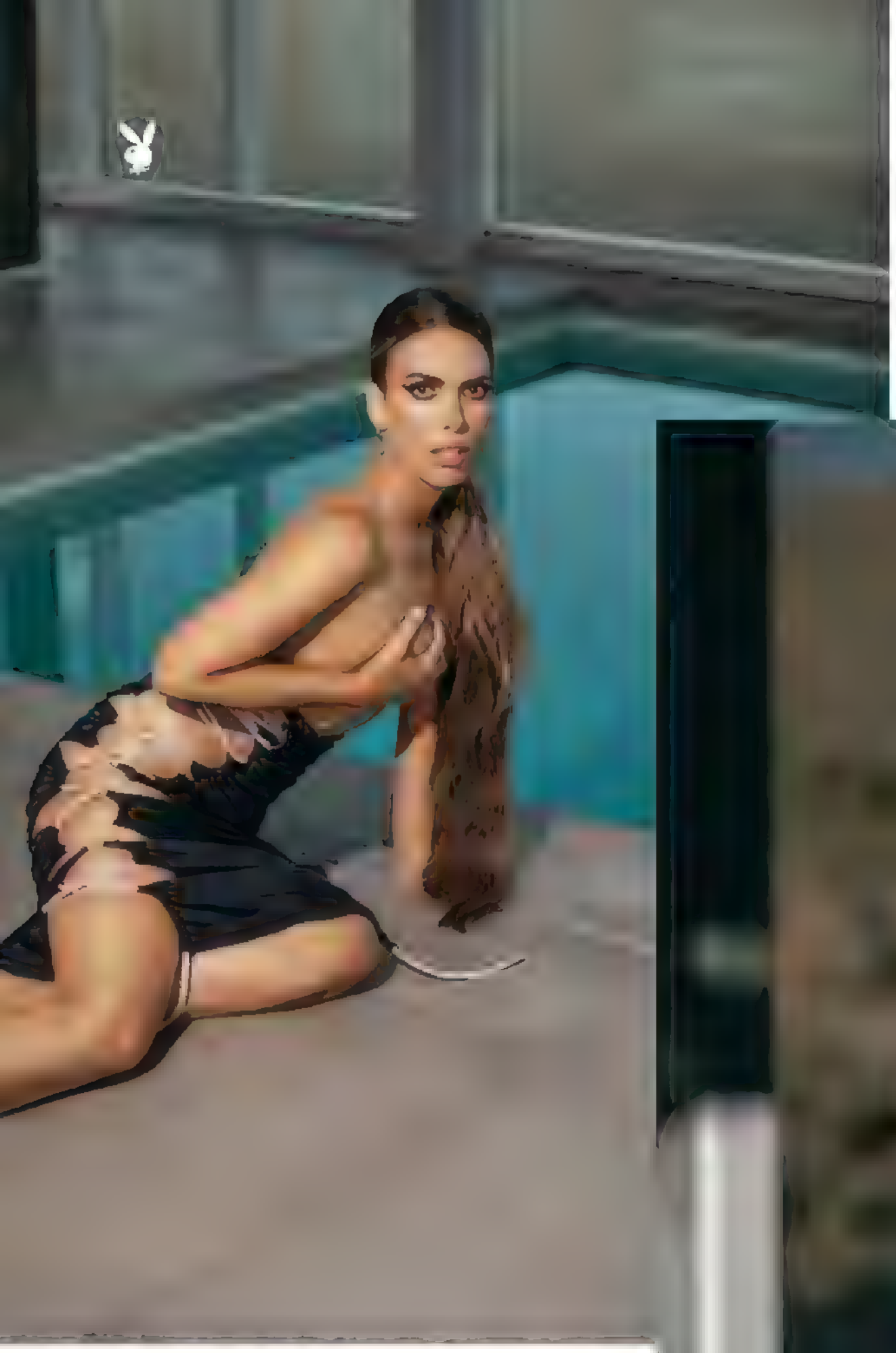

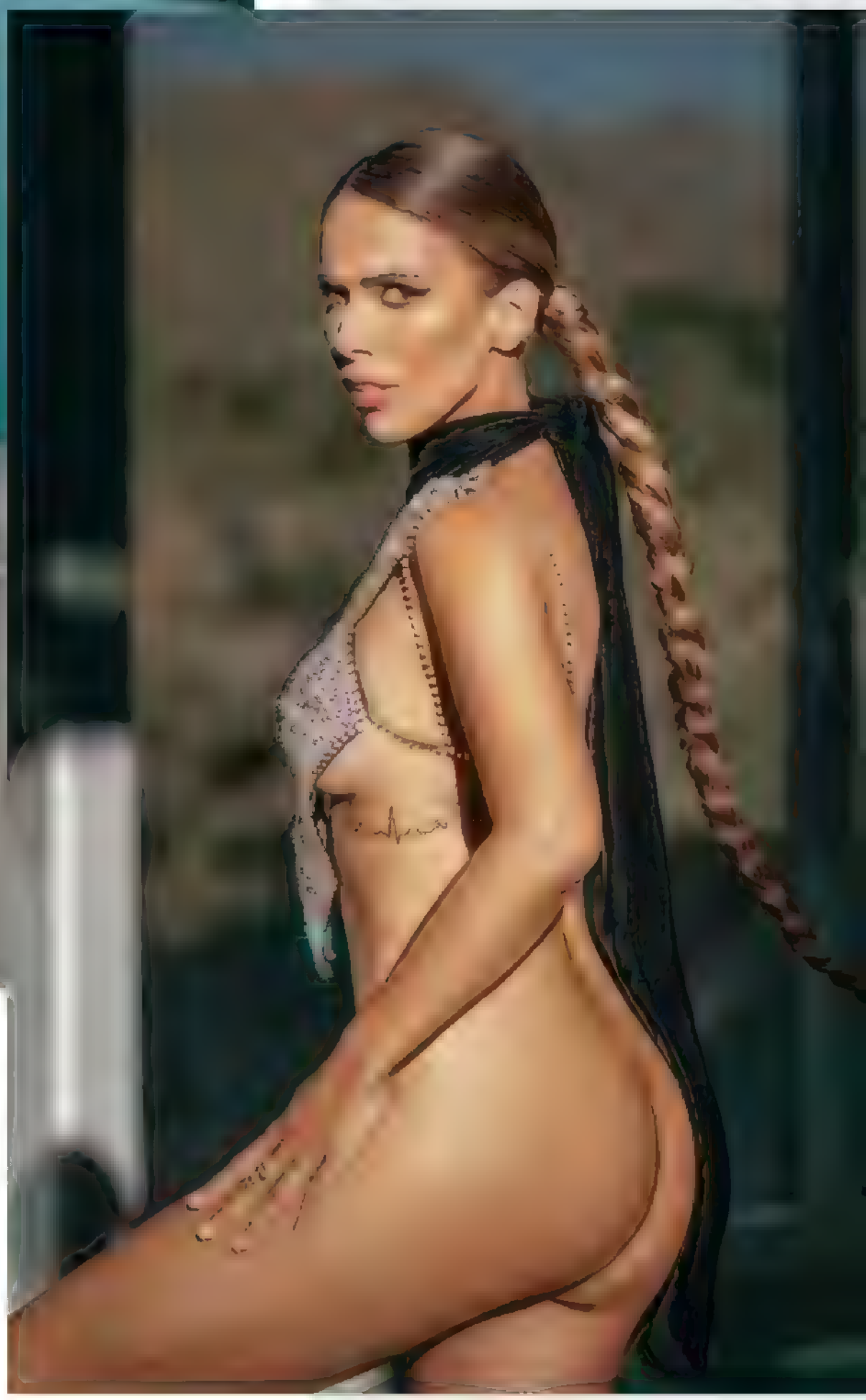

This issue we've got a truly special treat for you guys as we get candid with an exotic and extremely popular beauty, Lily Aspen. Inside Lily shares news on her recent travels, her social media experience and her dreams and visions for the future, take a look!

"I'm travel addicted. Literally. I've been to 38 countries and I won't stop."

Welcome Liliya and thank you for taking the time to sit with us. Well, let's get started with a short summary of yourself, could you tell our readers a little more about where you're from, where you live now and what are a few of the things you love doing for fun? I'm originally a Russian girl. I'm currently living in Los Angeles. Moved here 4 years ago. I was looking for a place with amazing weather during the year and good infrastructure so when I've been to Los Angeles for the first time I fall in love with all the amazing things we do have here like Ocean, 330 sunny days per year, mountains, hills, beautiful nature, nice people so I've decided to stay here. I love being outside and exploring national parks and hike trails. doing yoga somewhere in a park, going to the beach and dance on a silent disco, meditate and spend time with my friends. They think I'm an amazing cook so usually, I'm making a lot of delicious food like crepes with osetra caviar, Russian salads and other dishes. Also, I love short trips for 3-4 days to New York City, Miami or Las Vegas with my friends. Usually, I call it a "workation" like a mix of "work" and "vacation", I'm working online not attached to any place so I like to change the places.

Wow, you are extremely popular on Instagram, last we checked you had over 1,2m followers. How would you say your experience as a social media influencer has been so far? I've been doing Instagram blogging since 2014 and

I've got one very strong superpower. I have a Degree in Marketing and Strategic Management and great experience working with other brands and social media influencers. I do have a professional blog about social media marketing @popartmarketing (1.6m followers), I'm doing marketing consulting and online education for entrepreneurs. So I'm like a Gary Vaynerchuck but in Russia. That's why I'm doing my personal blog just for fun. I love the idea of sharing my values of well-being and financial stability, doing charity, traveling across the world, exploring new places, integrating different cultures etc.

On the topic of Insta, you have pictures of yourself in places all across the world. Could you tell us about some of the places you've been to and how the different cultures have influenced your own personality? I'm travel addicted. Literally. I've been to 38 countries and I won't stop. In the last couple of years, I've started exploring Africa and I fall in love with it. I love wild nature all the game drives, watching the animals, tracking the predators, doing horse back riding around a group of rhinos. Just imagine you're on a Safari car looking for something special and you never know would you meet a couple of leopards eating the kill or just nobody. It's like a meditation in motion. Also, I'm doing a lot of charity for rhinos, elephants, giraffes and other animals. Trying to help rescue them from cruelty. And charity for school building across Africa so it's a personal thing for me to see them in real life and feel the connection.

Could you tell us more about how your modeling journey has been so far and what have been some of the highlights of your career? Fun fact. I was overweight since I was a kid till 26. I was around 250lb (120kg) So I've started as a plus-size model and it was just a hobby I tried to accept my body and appearance so doing modeling and posing was a challenge for me but it worked great Then I've lost half of my weight, moved to Los Angeles and started doing modeling as a regular model. I love creative photoshoots Like a nighttime photo shoot at the middle of Time Square with fancy dress, a burger and a homeless guy That was a spectacular photoshoot This Playboy photoshoot is on my highlights list too I've never been totally naked, laying on rocks or posing around 10 or more people. I was really shy about it at the beginning but then I've understood that I'm professional and we all here just for creating something special So I've relaxed and just did my best

We must say, you're a gorgeous woman, we're sure you hear that all the time. What are some of the worst or funniest, and best pick-up lines you've ever gotten? Usually, guys are trying to impress me and started speaking Russian. Usually, it sounds really funny and not sexy at all And the best pick-up line is to say something funny or ask a question which is matters. Like one of Arthur Aaron's 36 questions Cause I like men with a good sense of humor and with whom I can have a really deep conversation Dick pics are good though LOL.

If you don't mind us asking, is there a lucky guy in your life and could you tell us more about him, also, if not, for all the eligible bachelors out there who'd like to know, what do you look for in a man? I'm not looking for anything or anybody I think that every person is whole and complete. So I'm just enjoying my life and would love to share some cool experiences and communicate with people with the same vibes, who care about themselves and our planet, have good sense of humor, who is active, spiritual and loving life. Good physical and mental health is a prerequisite

In a world of social distancing and the growth of social media more and more people are dating online. Do you have any tips for us guys looking to slide into our crush's DMs? Don't try to impress Just be yourself or the best version of yourself but sincere and true It always obvious when you're pretending to be someone you're not So just breathe in Breathe out And write your own best pick-up line. I bet it will work the best

On the topic of crush, now or growing up, who was or is your biggest celebrity crush and if you could go out on one date with them where would you go and what would you do? OMG! I was in love with Colin Farrell. And a couple of years ago I've met him in a spa place here in Los Angeles. He was there with his girlfriend But we've spent 10 minutes in a common steam room together, so now I can tell that I've seen naked Colin Farrell My other celebrity crush was Justin Timberlake So I've asked him to come to my place and taste my famous crepes It's my secret weapon Or asking him to go to Kenya with me To kiss giraffes. That's the best thing I've ever done.

We're still so impressed by your social media presence. For all the hopeful models out there, what advice would you give them on growing their audience and brand? Now the most important thing is being true to your audience and being unique It's a lot of instruments to grow your social media presence like viral videos on Instagram reels, recommendation section, collaboration with other influencers. It's getting more and more competitive so it's not enough just being a beautiful face or nice butt It's more about who you are. Your personality, your values, your interests. So it's important to learn more about social media marketing and psychology to understand your audience and their needs better

We love your IG photos with the rhinos and giraffes... can you tell us where you traveled to and what your experience was like? All the photos with animals are from different parts of Africa. I've been to Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia last month We were traveling with my mom there. I was flying on a micro-light, sitting in the middle of Victoria falls, tracking mountain gorillas and kissing giraffes. That was spectacular. Hope to come back to Africa soon again.

Traveling seems to be a passion of yours. Where are some of the places you still want to visit when all this lockdown business is over? I've never been to Australia and New Zealand. It was on my plan for 2020 but Lockdown started So hope to visit you guys as soon as borders are open. I want to see kangaroos and all the hikes, beautiful nature and amazing architecture Also, I want to explore Japan and Singapore.

You've come a long way in your career so far. In an ideal world, what are some of your dreams and where do you see yourself in the next 5 to 10 years in terms of long-term goals? I want to do more charity and probably build my own boutique hotel somewhere in Africa Or retirement center where you have good care and a lot of activities like yoga, art classes, dances and animal Safaries. The place where you can enjoy your life even if you're not 30 anymore

Can you believe we're almost halfway through the year already, are you working on any new and exciting projects at the moment and could you tell us more about that? My new project idea is pretty kinky but I want to share it with you guys. I want to create a female-oriented adult video production. Cause now almost all the content is created for men. Men's interests, men's needs, their fantasies And almost nothing for women So I want to change it. And create something Really unique based on my marketing and social media experience, using all my psychology skills and knowledge It's gonna be adult videos with the Stanislavski acting approach.

Well thank you Lily, it's been an absolute pleasure having you. Do you have any last words for our readers and more importantly where can they follow you on social media? Life is to short to wait So enjoy every minute Follow me on Instagram @liliya Nilova and @lily aspen let's keep in touch!

Playboy Interview

Charles Evers

A candid conversation with the mayor of Fayette, the first black candidate in Mississippi history and the KKK's latest public enemy number one

INTERVIEW BY **ERIC NORDEN** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NARA ARCHIVES/SHUTTERSTOCK**

"So y'all goin' to write a story on Evers?" asked the lady p"My, my, that nigra sure is comin' up in the world." Her smile was sweet, but it didn't reach the eyes Her husband, a stout white-haired man in a rumpled seersucker suit with an American-flag pin on the lapel, frowned. "We never had any trouble with our niggers before all this" The conversation could have been overheard anywhere in white Mississippi, but the fact that it took place in Fayette gave it a special relevance For the target of their criticism, Charles Evers, is not only a black man but their own mayor, the political leader of a town in which black voters outnumber whites more than two to one, and for the first time since Reconstruction, a white minority was confronting dominant black political power

Evers, 49, has been the undisputed leader of the civil rights movement in Mississippi since the sniper slaying of his younger brother, Medgar, on July 12, 1963. The day before Medgar's interment at Arlington National Cemetery, Charles assumed his mantle as NAACP state field secretary and quickly launched a major voter-registration drive and a series of successful boycotts of segregated business establishments throughout the state. In 1964, he and NAACP state chairman

Aaron Henry led the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in its unsuccessful attempt to unseat the all-white delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City Evers was a nuisance to the Democrats in those days, but within four years he had made his political mark on both the state and national scene, and in 1968, the "Mississippi Challenge" succeeded when Evers's biracial delegation of "loyalist" Democrats was seated at the Chicago convention and Evers himself appointed to the 12-man Democratic National Executive Committee, the first black to sit on the party's highest policy-making body

But the main thrust of his organizational activity—until now—has been the registration of black voters, facilitated by the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and under his leadership, over 200,000 blacks were registered in Mississippi between 1963 and 1970. By 1967, black voters outnumbered whites in six rural counties, and in one of these, Jefferson County, Evers established his personal power base. After an unsuccessful but narrowly contested Congressional race, he announced his candidacy for mayor of Fayette, a racially mixed community of 1,754 and the county seat. His opponent, Mayor R.J. ("Turnip Green") Allen—a nickname won by trading vegetables for black votes—had held the office for 18 years. In a campaign reminiscent of the Kennedys'—Evers was a close friend of Robert Kennedy, and Ethel and Ted pledged their support—Evers defeated the septuagenarian incumbent by 128 votes

Though the outcome sent deep waves of apprehension and resentment through the state, Evers' inauguration was attended by such prominent liberals as Ramsey Clark, Paul O'Dwyer, Theodore Sorensen, Whitney Young, Julian Bond and Shirley MacLaine, and messages of congratulation were sent by President Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Edmund Muskie, Eugene McCarthy and many others But such distinguished acclaim was less meaningful to black Mississippians than the sudden reality of power—and the possibility of extending that power to other communities and eventually to the statehouse itself

Within a day of the election, a number of whites had shuttered their houses and fled the city, including a restaurant owner who had endeared himself to black customers by posting a sign reading "Every cent spent by a nigger to be donated to the Ku Klux Klan." Nor did the defeated city administration go out of its way to smooth the transition to the new regime The majority of white city employees resigned after the election, and the outgoing mayor and his aldermen devoted their last days in office to a spending spree calculated to bankrupt the community. When Evers took office, there weren't enough funds in the town coffers even to maintain municipal services, and he was forced to appeal for public donations on a CBS news feature about Fayette The response was overwhelming Within eight days $100,000 had poured in, most of which has been used to open a public-health center With the help of political allies in Washington and Eastern financial circles, Evers has brought new industry into a town where 500 of the 1,000 black residents were unemployed, and federal grants have established vocational centers to train unskilled black—and white—youths

Fayette is still a depressed community, and its economy can hardly be said to be thriving, but dramatic gains have been made and continue to be made The work force has been substantially increased and, for the first time in years, the welfare rolls have been reduced. Such accomplishments have won Evers support even among some pillars of the white Mississippi business establishment. Tom B Scott, president of Jackson's First Federal Savings and Loan Association, considers Evers a valuable influence for progress: "Because of his connections, he could make Fayette a show place I think he is going to be a great help to Fayette and Mississippi " Syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak have written "Charles Evers is attempting a political balancing act designed to divide power between the Negro numerical majority and the economically dominant white minority.... If he can manage it without driving out the whites, it could be the beginning of biracial black-white power in the Deep South."

Evers has moved on to the next stage of his quest for such power Last April, he was nominated for governor by the Mississippi Loyalist Democrats, the state's nationally recognized Democratic Party, becoming the first black man ever to run for governor of Mississippi. His campaign has aroused new fears and hatred among some Mississippi whites and fresh fervor among his dedicated black supporters—as well as a surprising but still tentative ripple of support among the state's hitherto silent white moderates As Evers tours the state campaigning before black and white audiences—the positive reception at a number of white meetings has astonished reporters—he has triggered new controversy about both his objectives and his character, which was called into question early this year not by a political rival but by Evers himself In an extraordinary autobiography, he candidly—and perhaps foolhardily—confessed his affairs with white and black women and his previous careers as an underworld policy runner, bootlegger and head of a prostitution ring

To his supporters, he is still the p"Moses of Mississippi," about to turn his state into the promised land; but to his enemies, he is a money- and power-hungry demagogue prepared to risk a race war to further his own ambitions. To find out which—if either—is the real Evers, Playboy sent journalist Eric Norden to Fayette to interview its mayor at the height of his gubernatorial campaign. Norden reports

"Two hours out of Jackson, we cut west in our rented car off U.S. 20 along a potholed blacktop road, past pines and sweet gums and copses of oak and dogwood, the shacks growing shabbier as we near Delta country, the buzzards getting bolder, crouched over dead dogs on the roadside and flapping up as we pass. Off the highway the fields are empty; you can go for miles without seeing another car, and Northern paranoia conjures up images of Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman ringed by flashlights, waiting for the first bite of the chain. Finally, a Mississippi highway-patrol car passes, its radio antenna whipping the leaves off overhanging trees, the pink faces of two jowly cops blurring past, and I look at my black driver, but he's watching his speedometer A few minutes later, I see with relief a sign reading 'Welcome to Fayette, a community of progress and brotherhood, Charles Evers, Mayor,' and we're safe inside the city limits

"Fayette is an old town, and the white frame houses with their little patches of garden and tree-shaded lawns carry antebellum echoes. The air shimmers with the summer heat 105 degrees in the shade—and people move slowly, to conserve energy An ancient black woman, bent and shawled, holds a parasol above her head with both gnarled hands, and young men lounge in doorways, towels wrapped around their necks, like sparring partners between bouts It's obviously a poor town, but everything is clean and neat, and even the most humble homes and stores display none of the earmarks of despair that mar the urban ghettos It's Saturday, shopping day, and the streets are crowded, an occasional white face bobbing in the black sea. There are few Afros, no dashikis, and as I get out of the car and approach city hall, a passer-by nods pleasantly to me

"The atmosphere is relaxed, casual, but there's an undercurrent of tension that I feel even in the anteroom to the mayor's office as busy black and white aides bustle by, making last-minute preparations for a forthcoming festival marking the second anniversary of the Evers administration. Richard Woodard, one of the mayor's security guards, on loan to Fayette from the New York Police Department, tells me that harassment of Evers's supporters is growing The highway patrol has begun to systematically arrest black drivers with Evers stickers on their cars Death threats, he says, have also been increasing

"And then I'm in the mayor's office, decorated with portraits of Medgar, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and Evers himself

is waving me to a chair. He's a big man, over six feet, pushing 250 pounds, but he moves like an athlete, slow and controlled, with a lazy grace. His face is coarsely powerful, with a fighter's broken nose, slightly flattened, and a mobile mouth that breaks slowly into a broad smile of greeting. It's a warm smile, but his eyes are sad—and guarded. At first I thought it might be because I was white, but after some days with him I noticed this attitude toward everyone, even those closest to him; no matter how wide the smile, there is a detached, noncommittal reserve. He obviously likes people, but he doesn't seem to fully trust any of them, black or white.

"Over the next 10 days, I traveled everywhere with Evers on his campaign tours, skimming across treetops in a three-seater Piper Cherokee, riding along dusty roads in air-conditioned cars and battered pickup trucks, seated in his restaurant at the Evers Motel or in his apartment above the Medgar Evers Shopping Center, a veritable fortress with no windows and a small arsenal of rifles, revolvers and semiautomatic weapons. I came to like him and to respect him, but not to really know him. I think very few people do.

"He has a passion for life, but it derives from an intimacy with death—that of his brother, of so many others who have been close to him; and the possibility of his own. He tries to live every minute as if it were his last—and it very well could be. There is said to be a $15,000 contract on his life, and the Klan has vowed he won't live till election day, much less have a chance at the statehouse. I began the interview on that grim note."

PLAYBOY: The bodyguards who surround you, and the extensive security precautions on all your campaign trips, indicate that you take very seriously the death threats you've received since you announced your candidacy. Do you believe your life is in danger?

EVERS: In Mississippi, every black man's life is in danger. We go cheap down here; you learn to drink that in with your momma's milk. My life ain't worth a plugged nickel; I know that. I know they can gun me down in the back any time, jus' like they did Medgar. But that's not gonna stop me. Don't get me wrong; it's not that I'm seen so brave or nothin' like that, but I seen so much death round me it's jus' stopped scarin' me.

The bodyguards don't really make no difference anyway; if they really want to get you, they'll get you. They might be able to scare off some nut with a pistol, but not no professional killer. Look how they got Bobby; he was a few feet away, with all his bodyguards around, and it still didn't do no good. I know that by sayin' what I say and tellin' white folks down here that niggers are good as they are, I've probably signed my death warrant. But I've always believed, and Medgar felt the same way, that what counts isn't how many years you live or the way you die but what you do while you're here. And you can't make no contribution if you live in fear.

PLAYBOY: Have the death threats increased since you entered the gubernatorial race?

EVERS: Oh, yeah, no doubt about it. And funny thing is, a lot of the most vicious threats come from out of state—from places like Florida and New Jersey. Now, what I ever do to rile folks in New Jersey? But there it is. I always used to get some threats when I was field secretary for the NAACP back in the Sixties; some redneck would warn me, "Nigger, we gon' git you, we gon' git you like we got your goddamned brother." But they wasn't too frequent. Then when I ran for Congress in '68 against old Charley Griffin and came close enough to scare 'em—I won the primary, and they had to round up every cracker vote in the district to beat me in November—the threats speeded up and they made a couple of attempts to kill me. Once a car circled my home in Jackson and then shot the house up, but nobody was hit.

Then when I got elected mayor of Fayette, the threats started pourin' in. Kluxers would call me on my unlisted number and tell me there was gonna be one smartass nigger less round soon, and go into everythin' they'd do before they finished me off. You know, some folks can go to bed with a good book; me, I get these characters callin' all time of the day and night. And it's got even worse since I announced my candidacy for governor. But you know, those threats don't really mean too much, leastwise as long as they stay on the phone or stick to those anonymous letters. When you gotta watch out is when they stop talkin' and start shootin'.

"Sometimes the phone rings and I'll look up and for a second I'll wonder if it's Bobby. Or Martin. Or Medgar. Three times, everybody who was really close to me, everybody who offered hope."

PLAYBOY: Have there been any serious attempts on your life recently?

EVERS: Well, the really serious ones are the ones you don't know about till they squeeze the trigger. But I guess the best organized effort was the one back in late 1969, right after I'd been elected mayor. We were really pretty lucky on that one; we were tipped off jus' in time. I was sittin' in my office one mornin' when the phone rang, and a white woman was on the other end; you get pretty good distinguishin' 'tween black and white voices down here, though I guess to an outsider there don't seem that much difference. Anyhow, this white lady, she says, "Charles"—always the first name for niggers, remember—"Charles," she says, "they are going to kill you today. I don't always agree with you, but we can't afford to have you killed." Now, like I told you, I was gettin' these threats all the time, and I thought this one was jus' a li'l more polite, a li'l more subtle than most, so I jus' said, "Go to hell!" and hung up. And forgot about it, like you gotta learn to do.

Then about six o'clock, the phone rings again, and this time it's a man's voice—a white man—and he tells me the same thing as the woman. I realize now it was probably her husband and they'd got wind of somethin'. But I jus' said, "I got things to do," and hung up. But this time I took pause a bit, 'cause there was somethin' different about these calls. I began to get the feelin' they wasn't jivin'. Then at seven-fifteen, just as I'm about to go out for a bite to eat, the phone rings again and this time it's a black voice. I figured out later it was probably the white couple's maid; they'd brought her in on it when I wouldn't listen to 'em. And she says, "Mr. Evers, I'm a friend of yours, now don't hang up on me." And I says, "Look, honey, what is it?" So she says, "There's three men gon' kill you." I sorta snort and

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say, "Aw, c'mon, now," but she's real intense She says, "They're drivin' a 1968 Mustang, they've got five guns in the car. They been on the road and bought some clothes for a quick change, and one of 'em is in Natchez in a motel with a getaway car."

Well, when they get down to things like that, you gotta listen, 'cause this was jus' a year and a half after they got Martin in Memphis So I said, "Thank you very much," and as I hung up, I remembered seein' a '68 Mustang cruisin' round town earlier that day. So I packed my gun and left the office, and the minute I hit the sidewalk, there's this same Mustang parked across the street So I call over our police chief, who's waitin' outside for me, and he and one of his men, they pull out their guns and surround the car and order the driver out There was only one guy, a white man, but there was a small arsenal inside the car a carbine, three shotguns and a 38-caliber pistol So we asked him what he was doin' with all those guns and he just snarled right back, "I'm a Mississippi white man—I won't answer that." Well, that sorta answer ain't good enough in Fayette anymore, so we slapped him in jail under $10,000 bond on charges of carryin' concealed weapons and held him for a hearin'. I disqualified myself as judge to show that justice in Fayette didn't have no skin color or prejudice.

We found out he was from Tupelo He turned out to be head of the Knights of the Green Forest, a splinter group of the Klan that had broken off from the Mississippi Klan 'cause it was "too moderate" if you can believe that And the next mornin' Federal agents got in on the case and they picked up his two collaborators They caught one of 'em holed up in a motel room in Natchez, jus' like the tip-off call said, with a Thompson submachine gun. And they arrested the other, who was a bodyguard for one of the top segregationist politicians in the state, in Hattiesburg They was all charged with federal gun violations 'cause of the machine gun, which took 'em out of our jurisdiction.

"My life would be safe if I shuffled and tommed and said, 'Yassuh, Mr. Charley, we niggers is real happy. But then I'd be dead already. I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees."

PLAYBOY: What was the disposition of the charges?

EVERS: I doubt they'll ever bring 'em guys to trial. But you know, this man we had in our custody I tried to talk to him I mean, he'd all but admitted he wanted to kill me, but I wanted to find out what made him tick. So I said, "Listen, I don't know your story, but why don't you and me jus' sit down and talk about it?" But he was real surly; he wouldn't say nothin'. I told him, "Listen, you don't know me and I don't know you. Why would you want to kill me? I don't want to kill you. I had all the chance in the world to kill you we coulda dropped you right in your car but I didn't Now, why would you want to kill me?"

Up till then, he'd looked at me with these eyes like li'l snakes, but suddenly he dropped his head; he didn't know what to say. I think for a second there. I stopped bein' a symbol some smartass sassy nigger lookin' for power and almost became another human bein' to him. After we turned the three of 'em over to the federal authorities, he said to me, "You're fair But I hate you." And he told the FBI later that he was still gon' get me; nobody could stop him. Well, maybe he will someday. But in a funny way, I know he has a different opinion of me than when he came down with his execution squad. If he ever do get me in his cross hairs, at least it'll be a man he's shootin.'

PLAYBOY: Has the FBI been active in investigating threats against your life?

EVERS: Not at all. In this particular case, they was forced to act 'cause of all the publicity, and maybe 'cause of some pressure from friends of mine in Washington But by and large, the FBI jus' don't wanna be bothered.

PLAYBOY: A number of civil rights leaders have accused the FBI of deliberately dragging its feet on civil rights violations in the South. Do you agree?

EVERS: I get the impression that the FBI don't wanna rock the boat down here, maybe 'cause a lot of Southern politicians are real good friends of Mr Hoover's. Look at our Senator Eastland he's one of the worst racists since Bilbo, but he's head of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, which works hand in glove with the FBI, so Hoover never bothers him I think Hoover don't wanna antagonize those allies of his by actively protectin' our rights Plus the fact that most of the FBI agents down here are white Southerners to begin with, who have to work real close with the local white police and politicians, and probably share a lotta their prejudices Far as I can see, their attitude is, "Sure, we'll investigate a crime once it's committed, but we won't do nothin' to stop it." You saw that when Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a white civil rights worker, was murdered on an Alabama highway a few years ago The FBI had an informant in the Klan; he was right in the car with the Klansmen who shot Mrs. Liuzzo; he was armed himself; but he didn't do nothin' to stop it

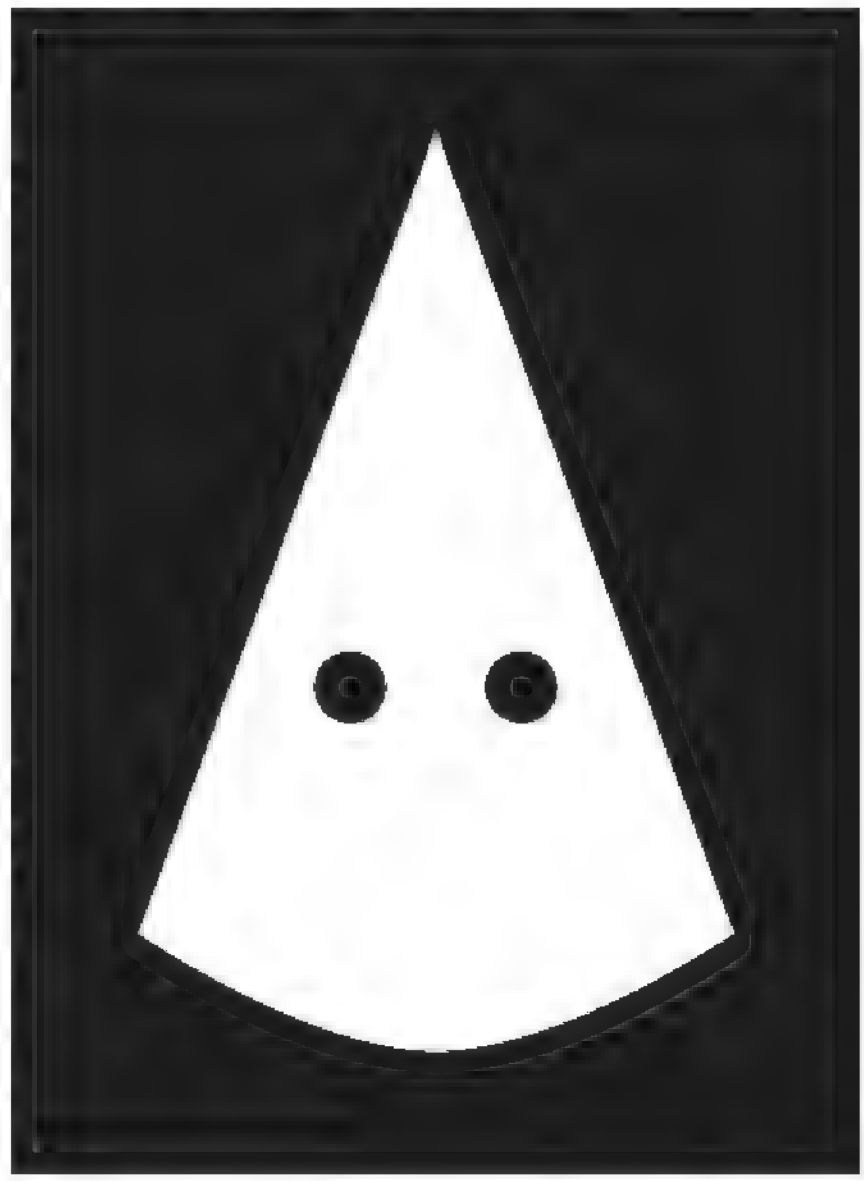
Right after Medgar's death, when I was really holdin' myself together with an effort, two FBI agents walk into my office and question me about it like I was on their list of suspects. I jus' looked at 'em; I couldn't say nothin' Everybody knew I was in Chicago when it happened, but to say I could kill Medgar when they shoulda been out lookin' for the ones that did, it was jus' too much Well, I got up from behind my desk and kicked 'em right out of the office. I can tell you, the way I felt, if they hadn't gone quick, there woulda been big trouble And these are the hot-shot protectors of law and order we hear so much about

I remember another time one night in Natchez a while back, we was holdin' a mass meetin', and this FBI man, he comes over to me and says, "Mr Evers, I'd advise you not to go out that door tonight, 'cause they're gonna kill you." So I say to him, "Who are you to tell me they're comin' here to kill me? Can't you stop 'em?" And he jus' looks at me real cool and says, "No, our job is not to make arrests before but afterward." Great That's like sayin', "You jus' go ahead and get yourself killed, but don't you worry, we'll look into it." Talk about closin' the barn door after they stole the horse! So I jus' lost my temper and told him, "Well, I don't need you round here. Get the hell outa my face!" And I walked out the door and nothin' happened.

But that's the way they operate. Look at Martin—right up till the end, they was more interested in buggin' his house and tappin' his phone than protectin' his life. With friends like that, you don't need enemies. So I rely on God and my .45 to protect me—though maybe not in exactly that order.

PLAYBOY: There have been reports that a $15,000 contract was issued on your life the day you announced your candidacy for the governorship. Do you think it would be canceled if you withdrew from the race?

EVERS: Oh, sure, my life would be safe if I shuffled and tommed and said, g"Yassuh, Mr. Charley, yassuh, we niggers is real happy, such, jus' step on us a li'l harder, we love it." But then I'd be dead already. Anyway, white folks make more outa the danger than I do. It's jus' somethin' you learn to live with if you're a black man in Mississippi. There ain't no certainty in life; you can live all your years cautious and not offend nobody and then get cancer or wrap your car around a pole or drop dead of a heart attack. So I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees.



Anyway, that's the way the people closest to me have gone. So many of the people who worked to help the black man in this state have died violently—Medgar, of course, and so many others. Vernon Dahmer, a man I was very close to, I asked him to become chairman of our voter-registration drive, and a week later they fire-bombed his house in Hattiesburg and burned him to death. The three kids, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Mike Schwerner, I remember those boys like it was yesterday. Goodman and Schwerner, they was white, they came down from New York to help our voter-registration drive in '64, and James Chaney, he was black, a native of Mississippi. Aaron Henry and me, we sent Goodman over to Meridian to join the other civil rights volunteers, and then him and Schwerner and Chaney set off for Philadelphia, Mississippi—and they got 'em on the way. We never saw 'em alive again.

Then there was Wharlest Jackson, a good friend of mine, the treasurer of the NAACP branch in Natchez. The last time I saw him, he came to visit me in Fayette and I recall him askin' me, "Charles, how we gon' change white men's hearts? We gotta change their hearts." Three days later, he stepped on the starter of his pickup truck in Natchez and a bomb blew him to bits. George Metcalf, the president of our Natchez branch, his car had blown up when he turned on the ignition, too, but he survived. And oh, God, so many others, people I never knew personally, but I feel I knew 'em jus' the same. Emmett Till, the little kid from Chicago; after they was acquitted by an all-white jury, the two men who murdered him boasted to reporters how they'd done it.

In Port Gibson, they killed a Negro boy, cut off his genitals and then left him in the middle of the road for the vultures. Also in Port Gibson, an old black man who was crippled and wheeled himself around on a li'l wagon, he was on the icehouse steps when a white cop walked up and said, "Nigger, get outa my way." He tried to pull his li'l wagon round, but he didn't move fast enough, so the policeman drew his service revolver and shot him five times, kept shootin' as he bounced down the steps. Then he went in and placed his order for ice. Nobody touched him. Nobody touches any of 'em.

Jus' last year somebody planted a rumor at Jackson State College that I'd been assassinated, and this set off a demonstration, so I went out on the campus and I told the kids, "Now, cool it, 'cause these bigots'll kill you. They're murderers, they killed my brother, they killed Martin, maybe they even killed Jack and Bobby, and the same kind of ism that killed them will kill you." And they promised me they'd wind things down, but while some students were still out on the street, the state highway patrol arrived—they're sort of the Mississippi SS—and with no provocation, with no warnin's to disperse, nothin', they opened fire with shotguns loaded with double-O shot, the biggest and deadliest shot there is. And when they finished, two black students was lyin' there dead and another 12 was wounded, some serious. One of the white cops got on the radio; it was recorded. He said, "Better send an ambulance, we killed us a few niggers here." Jus' like that. A grand jury later ruled that the troopers "had a right and were justified" in shootin' off their 150-round fusillade, although none of the kids were armed or doin' anythin' more than noisy.

So that's the way it goes down here: murder followed by whitewash, followed by more murder. And after a while, white folks get the idea it's no crime killin' black folks, 'cause they always get away with it. And for every one of us we know gets murdered, how many others been killed and buried deep in the forests or fed to the gators in the swamps? So that's why I don't get as riled up at the thought of my own death as some of my friends up North do. When death been walkin' right behind you since you're a baby, you get used to it. I grew up with death. He's almost one of the family by now.

PLAYBOY: You were raised in the Mississippi of the Thirties. What effect did that have on you as a child?

EVERS: Well, you realize pretty early that white folks don't put no stock on your life. I'll never forget, I was ten and Medgar was eight when it happened, but it's clear as yesterday: We saw our first lynchin'. We was livin' in Decatur and there was this good friend

of my father's—Mr. Tingle was his name, Willie Tingle. Somebody said he looked funny at a white woman, an insultin' look, and a mob got together and tied him to a wagon and dragged him through the streets. Then they hung him up from as tree and shot him full of holes. For months afterward, his clothes was lyin' in that field, all bloodstained, and Medgar and I would see 'em every day. I can close my eyes and still see 'em, real as life. We was jus' kids, but it shocked the daylights outa us. I went to my daddy right after it happened and I asked, "Why did they kill him?" and he say, "Jus' 'cause he was a colored man." So then I asked, "Could they kill you, too?" and he told me, "If I did anythin' they didn't like, they sure could." I guess I grew up a little that day.

PLAYBOY: Did that kind of fear permeate your childhood?

EVERS: Well, like I say, you learn to live with it. And I'm grateful to my daddy; he taught me never to be afraid of nobody. My daddy was strong and he was mean. White folks used to call him a "crazy nigger," 'cause they couldn't scare him or make him crawl. Never. His name was Jim Evers and he was a big man, over six feet tall, jus' like me. And he worked hard, from sunup to sundown, but he never let white folks break his spirit. Lookin' back, I don't know how he ever survived, back in the Twenties and Thirties, when the Klan was ridin' high and things was so bad. But he would always stand up to white folks, even though it wasn't nothin' to kill a nigger in those days, when all the whites would say, "Niggers no damn good anyway, let's jus' go out and kill us one." But they was afraid of my daddy, and that's a lesson he taught me—that most bigots are cowards. If they haven't got you outnumbered ten to one, they'll back down, 'cause they're afraid to meet you face to face.

"In Chicago, I drifted into the numbers racket. Ran some girls for a while too. But after Medgar's death, something happened to me. I felt I had to live my life in a way he'd be proud of."

I remember on Christmas Eve the white folks would always celebrate by shootin' off fireworks, Roman candles and sparklers and firecrackers. And Medgar and me, we felt bad 'cause we wasn't allowed to see it; no colored folks was allowed in town by the Klan. But our daddy, he saw how we felt and he told us, "C'mon, boys, we goin' to town." And he took a baseball bat he'd made for us out of an old broom handle, and he said, "If anybody throws a firecracker at us, we gon' use this on him."

So we walked down the road to Decatur and the white folks along the way jus' stood there starin' at us, their mouths hangin' open. Once a white kid ran up in front of us and he was about to light a firecracker, so my daddy said, "You throw that firecracker and I'll bust your brains out." He ran and told his father, who came up all mad-lookin', but my daddy jus' told him, "That goes for you, too!" The white man backed right down and nobody gave us no trouble. That night we thought the Klan might come out to get us, so we sat up all Christmas Eve with rifles, waitin' for 'em, but nobody came. It was lucky for 'em they didn't; we'd have killed every one of 'em. Medgar and me, we was really disappointed they didn't come.

PLAYBOY: Did local whites ever take any reprisals against your father because of his attitude?

EVERS: No, he always got away with it, and nobody ever laid a hand on him. If you're afraid, they'll smell your fear and be right after you. But not my daddy. I remember one time, I must have been about nine, when Daddy took Medgar and me into the commissary at the sawmill where he worked then. It was a real company store; you could buy on credit, but they'd squeeze your lifeblood outa you. Daddy would buy all our stuff there, groceries and a box of snuff for himself—black folks always dip snuff down here—and jus' say, "Charge it," and then he'd pay out of his pay check every Saturday. The owner there was a real mean red-neck; he hated niggers. Now, he knew that Daddy couldn't read or write, but what he didn't know was that my daddy had this natural gift for figures; he could add and subtract and multiply in his head faster and better than most folks can on paper. So this time, when he took Medgar and me into the store to pay his bill, he figured out that the owner had overcharged him by five dollars—and in those days, and with the little Daddy was makin', that was big money.

So Daddy told the man he was wrong, and that red-neck got nasty as a rattlesnake. "Nigger," he screamed, "don't you tell me I'm tellin' a lie." Now, this was a real mean racist; he was always beatin' on black folks; he had a reputation for it. But my daddy, he wasn't frightened at all. He jus' said, "You're wrong. I don't owe that much." That white man's eyes looked like they could drip poison then and he shouted, "You callin' me a liar, nigger?" But Daddy stayed cool, he answered him real calm and said, "Well, I don't owe that and I'm not goin' to pay it." And then the man moved behind the counter to grab his gun and Daddy, he snatched a Coke bottle, broke it off at the neck and got between him and his gun. There was ten or fifteen whites in the store then, all mean, so Medgar and me, we both grabbed Coke bottles and got behind Daddy. He turned to us and said, "Get outside, boys," but we told him, "No, Dad, we're not gonna leave you in here." And the owner, he screamed, "I'll kill you, you black son of a bitch!" But Daddy said real soft, "You better not move, you better not go round that counter." Now, all Daddy had was a broken Coke bottle, and the owner could've got his gun, and so could his friends; but they was all afraid to move. And that owner, he was shakin' like a leaf.

So Daddy jus' backed out of the store and he bluffed all of 'em. When we got outside, Medgar and me wanted to run, we thought they'd follow us and whip us, but Daddy told us, "Don't run, don't run. They're nothin' but a bunch of cowards." And they was. We walked back home along the railroad tracks and nobody followed us. We was real proud of Daddy and we put our arms round his waist and he patted us on the head and told us, "Don't never let anybody beat you. Don't never let any white folks beat you." And he said, "If anyone ever kicks you, you kick hell out of him." That stayed with me all the time I was growin' up in Mississippi and white folks tried to hassle me. It's 'cause of my daddy that my nonviolence goes just so far.

PLAYBOY: Were you hassled much as you grew up?

EVERS: Well, it wasn't all bad. Medgar and me, we had fun like other kids did. But in the back of your mind, you always had this feelin' that you was different; you knew that to white folks you jus' wasn't a full human bein'. And you can never get rid of that feelin' At church the preacher would always tell us, g"We all God's chillen" and "Nobody's different from nobody else," and I'd come back and ask Daddy, "Why are we different? The preacher don't say we gotta be different." And he'd tell us, "Well, son, that's the way it is, and they ain't nothin' we can do about it 'Cause if we try to do anythin' about it, they kill us " That's somethin' no white folks can understand, growin' up black in a white world, always bein' an outsider, scared for your life if you speak out It's a horrible feelin', and it's crushed a lot of our people, drove 'em to whiskey or drugs And those of us who did keep goin', God, think of all the time and potential we had to waste jus' tryin' to survive Even my daddy, strong as he was, and the way he'd face up to individual white men, he'd given up hope of ever changin' the system itself. He was resigned to it; he accepted it, much as he hated it That was the one area where Medgar and I differed from Daddy. We never accepted it. When he told us the good jobs were white man's jobs, that blacks could never rise, we jus' wouldn't accept it We vowed we'd change things, that we'd make things better Even as kids we felt that way

PLAYBOY: Do you remember your first conscious act of rebellion?

EVERS: Well, in a way, thinkin' free was an act of rebellion in itself, 'cause racism was so shot through the system that it warped a lot of black folks' minds, made 'em believe they was inferior So many parents would up and tell their kids, "It's a white man's world and you jus' happen to be here, nigger " And black kids saw all the power and all the money and all the decent livin' on the side of the whites, and a lot of 'em thought, hell, there must be somethin' wrong with us to live like this I mean, even the standards of beauty you'd see in papers and magazines and movies were all white standards; black kids grew up thinkin' they was ugly, and nothin' destroys your self-respect more than that So it's a real step forward jus' to free yourself of that conditionin' and vow that someday you'll make things different.

I guess the first real action we took was when I was ten or eleven and Medgar was eight or nine. We wanted to make us some money, so we figured we'd sell newspapers. We sent away to Chicago for copies of the Defender, the Negro newspaper, and we planned to sell 'em to black folks But the whites in town, they stopped us, they said, "That's a job for white boys " I suppose, lookin' back, it was a small thing, but it really hurt us at the time We didn't take it lyin' down, though I said to Medgar, "If we can't sell our papers, why should they sell their papers to us?" So whenever a white boy would come sellin' papers in our part of town, we'd lay for him and jump out from the bushes and slap a toe sack over his head and take his papers and tear 'em up and throw 'em in the woods

Now, that may sound like kids' roughhouse, but in Mississippi, black folks got killed for a lot less Some white folks, they heard about it and got riled and they went to my daddy and said, "Jim, you better do somethin' about those kids of yours " And Daddy called us in and he said, "What you been up to?" And we told him how they wouldn't let us sell papers and that we was gettin' back for it Daddy, he was jus' silent for a minute; then he said, "Well, don't get in no trouble, now." And from our daddy, that was like approval, 'cause he was a real old-fashioned disciplinarian, none of that permissive stuff you have today We were smartass kids and Daddy knew how to handle us; he'd tan our hides if we done wrong or was disrespectful to him or Momma. So I always thought he was secretly glad his kids was standin' up to white folks A lotta black folks, you know, their spirit had been broken, and if a white man came to 'em about anythin', they'd quiver and shake You can't blame 'em, considerin' the kind of society they lived in, but Daddy wasn't that way He was mean and though and proud, and we loved him

PLAYBOY: Did your father always work at the sawmill?

EVERS: He had lots of jobs, but mostly what he did was survive, and keep his family together, and in Mississippi 30 years ago, for a black man, that's like sayin' he was a brain surgeon He'd work his back off for us, all kinds of jobs, in the sawmills, and on the side he even ran a small undertakin' business with a rickety old hearse And my momma, she was the same way, jus' like Daddy She'd work all day as a maid for a couple of white folks, hard work, and at the end of the day, she'd come home all tired and drained, and right away she'd have to start washin' the white folks' laundry I can still see her strong hands workin' over that laundry We was never allowed in the kitchen when she was doin' it, for fear we'd mess it up And when we helped her fold, she'd say, "Now, boys, be careful, don't wrinkle Mr Gaines's shirts. Mr Gaines'll get mad if you wrinkle his shirts " And we'd take this big load of laundry over with her and we'd watch Mrs. Gaines give Momma a paltry 50 cents for washin' and ironin' 15 or 20 shirts, overalls, dresses, socks and underclothes and maybe a dozen big sheets And she always had to go to the back door All day she'd washed their dirty linen, fixed their beds, cooked their food, washed and combed their kids, and we still wasn't good enough to be let in the front door. Momma would work six long hard days for the Gaines, and they'd pay her a lousy two-fifty a week. Medgar and me was only kids, but we decided we'd be burned in hell three times over if we ever let our kids work and live like that

Sometimes I wonder where she got her strength, and how she'd always have time for a smile and a pat for us, no matter how exhausted she was It must have come from God. Dear Momma. Her name was Jessie; she was part Indian, Creole Indian, and she liked to pad round in her bare feet Tiny li'l feet, like a bird's, must have been a size four. She was real small, about five feet, two, and stout, but she must have been a real looker when she was young She was a devoutly religious woman, Momma was, she read the Bible all the time and she drew a lotta solace from it. She always pounded it in our heads that we was gonna get an education and make somethin' of ourselves; she always wanted the best for us. Once I was elected mayor of Fayette, all I could think was I wish Momma was here today Medgar and me was really lucky we had parents who not only loved us but who we could respect and look up to

PLAYBOY: How many were there in your family?

EVERS: There was me and Medgar and our two sisters, Liz and Ruth. Ruth died when she was 21 and Liz has a grocery store in Chicago We also had two half-brothers and a half-sister from Momma's previous marriage Eddie, Gene and Eva. Momma's grandfather was half white, and he looked all white, which is pretty common in Mississippi You hear all that jive about racial purity and mongrelization from the Kluxers, but they're the ones who been slippin' into bed with our women for 300 years. Elsewise, where do all those pale-skinned Negroes come from? The white Southerner has always lived white and slept black, which makes all that talk about miscegenation so much hypocrisy on his part Anyway, we was a real close-knit family Momma and Daddy, they loved each other, and when there's love in a house, it reaches out and warms everybody in it. She was proud of Daddy, and she didn't give him no back talk Our house wouldn't have been very fertile groun' for women's lib, I'll tell you that But at night, Medgar and I would lie in bed and hear 'em talkin' over the day and makin' plans, talkin' on way into the night together They really enjoyed each other

Of course, all married couples have problems, and Momma and Daddy had their share. Daddy tended to be tightfisted, and when you got so little money comin' in, that can be a real problem But the most serious problems they had was his flings with other women. There was a spell, I must have been 14 then, when it got really bad, and I

realized what was goin' on. Daddy was stayin' away from home a lot and spendin' time with a lady we knew; her kids were our friends. I'd see Daddy over there and he'd give her things, and her kids things, new clothes and stuff, even when we had nothin'. And that hurt, it really did. I felt Daddy had let Momma down. Let us all down, denied us. Finally, Momma told us what was happenin', but she never would say one word against him to us. "We jus' gonna pray for him," she tell Medgar and me. "Someday he'll change." Well, he did. He carried on with this other woman a while longer, but finally he broke it off and for the rest of his life, he was as good and loyal and devoted a husband as a woman could want. So I guess Momma's prayers was answered.

But I'll tell you, that incident did somethin' to me; it left scars, I guess. I mean, a mother is closer to a son than to anybody else, even his daddy, and it did somethin' bad to me to see her hurt, even though she tried to put a good face on it. And it wasn't fair, but I used to blame Daddy's women more than him for what was goin' on. Us kids used to make trouble for his girlfriends whenever we saw 'em, insult 'em and sometimes throw things at 'em. I guess in our childish way we was tryin' to protect Momma. But the thing bred a kind of hate for women in me. I know it don't make no sense, but I came to identify all women with Momma's pain, and I wanted to get back at 'em. I made a solemn oath to myself then that I'd never give a girl flowers or candy or a valentine, or treat her with anythin' but contempt. And even though I know it's not right, that attitude stuck with me. I've used women, I've made 'em pregnant and dumped 'em, I've put 'em in whorehouses, but I've never respected 'em.

PLAYBOY: Not even your wife?

EVERS: No, Nan is different. I love Nan, jus' like I loved Momma. I'll admit I have my own fling now and then, but I never allowed any other woman to come between us. I told Momma that my wife would never suffer because of some other woman, and she hasn't. I may have somethin' on the side now and then, but nothin' serious, nothin' that will endanger our marriage. And I'd never come between any other man and his wife and family.

PLAYBOY: Isn't your attitude toward women—your mother and your wife on a pedestal and all others dirt—unhealthy as well as irrational?

EVERS: It may be, but I can't change the way I feel. Momma used to say to me, "Now, Charles, don't you go round tryin' to hurt women." But I disobeyed her there. I always tried to get even with women for Momma's sake, to avenge her; and right down to this day, I have a hard time likin' most women. That's why I've never been too popular with girls. But I'm bein' frank with you, and healthy or unhealthy, that's the way I am, and it's too late to change now.

PLAYBOY: Did Medgar share your hostile attitude toward women?

EVERS: Oh, no, not Medgar. Medgar was always different from me; he was kind and gentle; he never wanted to hurt nobody. I was the rough one, the trouble-maker. All the fights and messes we got into, it was my fault, not his. Medgar, he liked gentle girls, shy girls, young girls. But not me. I liked 'em older and sassy, gals who'd take care of me and give me some money for clothes and things. But Medgar, he was a romantic. I guess. He was always considerate, worried about people's feelin's whereas I was willin' to ride over 'em roughshod to get what I wanted.

PLAYBOY: Were you and Medgar always close?

EVERS: Oh, yeah. I loved him. I was kind of fatherly toward him. I mean, he was my baby brother, and I'd try to take care of him, look after him. We went every-where together, did everythin' together. We used to sleep with each other, and one of us was always kickin' the other one out of bed. I remember those cold winter nights—and it gets cold down here, believe me. I always warmed the bed for him. God Almighty, was those old sack sheets cold! I'd warm up a spot for Medgar, then shift over and give it to him. I used to put my legs on him to keep him warm. It seems just like yesterday. It's hard to believe he's gone.

PLAYBOY: Can you remember when you and Medgar first became aware of white hostility?

EVERS: Well, that's sorta like askin', "When did you first realize you're black?" A lotta white folks ask that. What they don't understand is that you realize you're black almost from the day you're born. We come into the world in an old shack with some ancient midwife who pulls us outa our momma's womb, while the white kids are born in a fine modern hospital with doctors and nurses. The infant-mortality rate is very low with white kids; with black kids up to two years old, it's almost 50 percent. We're reared in houses with flies and roaches, with roofs that leak when it rains, with rickety old furniture that's fallin' apart, without even a coat of paint on the outside. Bein' black is in the air you breathe, and from the time you're a baby, your momma and daddy tell you how the white folks hate you and how you gotta be careful how you deal with 'em or they can kill you just' as quick as they'd step on a bug. And you see that hostility all round you. Sometimes it's open and raw, other times it's subtle, but it's always there, it dogs your heels like a shadow. When you're black, most times your childhood jus' ain't no fun at all. All the time it's bein' drilled into you to learn your place, to get off the street and into the gutter when a white woman passes by, so there's no chance you might brush against her and defile her.

I recall when we were livin' in Decatur as boys, Medgar and I used to hate it when Momma would send us into the local store to buy sugar or flour. The minute we got inside, the white men hangin' round would start insultin' us and pushin' us around. "Dance, niggers!" they shouted at us all the time. The owner, the man who took our money, he was worse than any of 'em. I used to vow to Medgar that someday I'd have a store of my own and I'd make the white man dance to my tune. Well, I have several today, but I don't insult or mistreat anybody, black or white. But you know, things like that, they get you down. I mean, why should kids have to dread jus' goin' into the community store? And there were so many things like that, so many little humiliations that finally build and build till they're crushin' down on your back like a millstone. If I done nothin' else in my life, I seen to it that my kids ain't had to grow up like that.

PLAYBOY: Were all the whites you came into contact with hostile to you?

EVERS: Oh, no, not at all. There was a lotta good white folks, decent people, kind people. But the over-all atmosphere was so hostile, so sick, that the whites with decent instincts were afraid to speak out. They might be nice to us personally, but they'd never dare to challenge the system, so they left the field to the Kluxers. Moderates may be a silent majority in Mississippi, but if so, up to recently they been stone-mute. There are exceptions, though: people like Hodding Carter, Jr., a white newspaper publisher in Greenville who's fought racism for 30 years, and some li'l people. One of the white men Momma used to clean house for, he gave Medgar a letter of recommendation when he was applyin' to Ole Miss, and believe me, that takes some guts.

PLAYBOY: Did you have any white friends as a child?

EVERS: Oh, yeah, and that's sad, too, 'cause white and black kids have always grown up together in the South, played together, become friends. But only until they reach a certain age, and then a kinda curtain drops down between them, and that's the end of it. When Medgar and I was kids, we always played with white kids, mostly the children of people Momma worked for. The Gaines kids, Margaret and Bobby, we grew up together, we played together, we ate together, we slept together. We loved each other, we was close as peas in a pod. We knew we was black and they was white, but we was so close it

jus' didn't seem to matter But then we started to grow up, and all of a sudden, it did matter I'll never forget one day Momma was leavin' to clean up the Gaines house and Medgar and me, we said, "Momma, we wanna go, too We wanna play with Margaret and Bobby." Momma jus' looked at us kinda funny and said, "You can't play with 'em no more." "Why, Momma?" we asked We jus' couldn't understand it; I mean, these were our friends. I realize now that Mrs. Gaines must have called Momma aside and said, "Jessie, Margaret's becomin' a woman, so it's time you told Medgar and Charles...." Momma would've got the message; that's an unwritten law down here.

Anyway, that was that Jus' overnight you lost your friends Sometimes after-ward, we'd meet Margaret on the road into town and she'd chat with us, and we kept thinkin' of her as a friend, 'cause she always made it clear she remembered our closeness as kids But she was an exception Our other white friends, they never bothered to look back at us. One time when I was goin' to high school, I ran into one of the white Time boys Medgar and I had grown up with We'd been very close, and I was glad to see him again, so I said hello and called him by his first name. But his eyes narrowed and his face got strange and tight and he told me, "Listen. James Charles, you call me mister " When I told Momma and Daddy, they jus' said, "Well, that's the way white people are; they think they're better than we are." But I jus' wouldn't accept it That kinda thing was happen-in' all the time, and it jus' sorta made you lose faith in people

PLAYBOY: Did you respond with hatred of your own?

EVERS: I'm sorry to say I did; both Medgar and I did. That's one of the worst things the white racists did they taught us to hate Momma saw it happenin' and she argued with us; she prayed for us every night and tried to make us understand that hatred jus' breeds more hatred and never solves nothin' But we saw too much brutality and exploitation of black folks all round us, and we began to grow bitter and wouldn't listen to her Back in those days, in the Thirties and Forties, the Klan had everythin' its own way, and the atmosphere in the state was really bad All across Mississippi the racists put up big signs outside their towns Negro, Read If you can't read, Run anyhow And a lot of our people had to run in those days, jus' to stay alive. And a lot of others never made it There was lynchin's practically every other day and countless beatin's and burnin's of black homes

And Medgar and I saw all this, and we said, "Well, if they hate us so much, we'll hate back, and if they shoot at us, we'll shoot back, too " For a while, we even discussed the idea of formin' a black Mau Mau underground movement, like Jomo Kenyatta was leadin' against the British in Kenya, assassinatin' whites and slaughterin' families at night and makin' hit-and-run raids Fortunately, it was only talk, but that shows where we'd got to. But Medgar was by nature so gentle that he managed to overcome his hate and he grew to really believe in brotherhood between blacks and whites and the power of love Those weren't jus' words from a pulpit to him; he really came to believe in that, deeply. Me, it took longer, but finally I managed to purge the hate out of my system It wasn't easy, though, believe me

PLAYBOY: Did Mississippi blacks make any organized attempt at armed self-defense during your boyhood?

EVERS: No, we was too disorganized, and jus' too plain scared for our lives. Some of us would have guns and fire back if we were attacked, and once in a while a Klansman would catch a bullet himself But there wasn't no drive or movement And back in those days, with the climate not only in Mississippi but in the country as a whole the way it was, I don't think any such effort would've stood much chance of success. You gotta remember that when people are Completely cowed and suppressed, they don't make revolutions. They too busy jus' scratchin' out a livin' or stayin' clear of a lynch mob It's only when things get a li'l bit better, when a chink of light shows through, that people see how much better things could and should be, and start to organize and take action. Our people were so poor, so scared and so poorly educated that they couldn't fight back in any organized way

PLAYBOY: As far as education goes, defenders of segregation have maintained that until the Supreme Court desegregation ruling, black schools in the South, although separate, were genuinely equal to white schools—and sometimes even better Is there any truth to that?

EVERS: I always get a laugh when I hear that line about separate-but-equal schoolin'. The school Medgar and I went to was typical of the whole system, and it was about as bad as a school could be To start off with, we could only attend school from mid-October to mid-February, when the whites shut the schools down so black youngsters would be free to work as field hands to plow and clear for the spring plantin'. So we only had four months of school. Think about that; we was only allowed to attend school when the whites didn't need us for nothin'. I remember how we'd get up for school in the mornin's, it was generally cold and we'd have to go out and get wood for a fire. Momma had to go off at sunrise every mornin' to make the Gaines's breakfast and help "Miss Ann" get her kids ready for the white school. So we'd have to get up and slop the hogs and wash and iron our clothes while Momma was off workin', and for our breakfast we'd have to eat cold corn bread or chitlins or anythin' left over from dinner the day before Then Medgar and I had to walk the three miles to our school along the dusty roads or in the rain, shiverin' in our patched-up jeans, while the big new yellow school bus would pass by, takin' the white kids to their expensive modern school And as they'd pass, they'd jeer at us and call us dirty niggers and spit at us and sometimes throw rocks at us The driver always slowed down to give 'em a good shot, and we'd have to jump off into the ditch and go to school all muddy and damp

Not that there was much need to dress up for our school It was jus' a dingy old one-room shack with shingle walls and roof, so when it rained in the winter, it'd rain right on you and a cold wind jus' cut right through the buildin' with nothin' to stop it. There was an old potbellied stove in the middle of the room, and our teacher, Miz Atkins, would send Medgar and me out to get wood for a fire first thing we got in, and all the other kids would sit shiverin' in their hand-me-down clothes till we could get the fire goin'. The girls, they wrapped their feet in pieces of old horse blankets so they wouldn't freeze Once our teeth had stopped chatterin', we'd get in some spellin' or arithmetic, but it was generally so cold that we couldn't concentrate much Neither us nor the teacher. And she couldn't give us no real individual attention, 'cause there was almost 100 kids squeezed into that one room. Then, finally, three o'clock rolled round and we had the three-mile walk back home, and along the way the white school bus would pass us again, and the kids our mommas had fed and sent off to their brand-new school that mornin' would yell, "Let's see you run, niggers!" and the driver would try to sideswipe us so we'd have to jump off the road to avoid bein' hit. That was our typical school day, and it was pretty much the same for black kids all across the state and in most of the rest of the South Our black teachers tried hard, but they jus' didn't have the equipment or the trainin' or the environment to do the kinda job they would've liked to Hell, a lotta black schools didn't even have textbooks for the kids White folks, you know, they used to figure, well, a dumb nigger is a contented nigger, so they did the best they could to keep us dumb

PLAYBOY: You attended a black college, Alcorn A&M. Was the black higher educational system any better?

EVERS: Not much, though I'm happy to say things have improved considerably in recent years. And the improvement in grade and high schools has been terrific since the Supreme Court's desegregation rulin' was finally enforced. Now our kids are goin' to the modern white schools and gettin' a chance at a decent education.

But it was different in my day. I have a degree from Alcorn, but I couldn't pass a tough grammar school test today So I'm a product of the Mississippi so called separate-but-equal educational system, and I can assure you that the last thing it is is educational. That's why I think black kids who get that kind of inferior education should have an opportunity to use a preparatory tutoring service to qualify them to go on from shanty schools to good universities

I'm also 100 percent in favor of black-studies programs, in high schools as well as colleges, for whites and blacks alike Black kids ain't been taught nothin' about their heritage and culture and historical accomplishments When I was in school, all we learned in our text books—when we learned anythin' was about white culture and history The few references to blacks jus' described them as ignorant savages or beasts of burden with strong backs and weak minds One of the problems is that so many white historians of the 19th and early 20th centuries were racists and passed on their prejudices in their books. Look at the completely negative picture most all history books paint of Reconstruction, which was the first genuine attempt to integrate the races in the South and would've worked if a political compromise hadn't been worked out in Washington in 1877 that sold the blacks down the river. But the history books that both white and black kids read are too often distorted I've read enough objective black history—after I finished college—to know that.

PLAYBOY: You sound as if you don't think college was worthwhile.

EVERS: I learned most of my lessons from life, not from books; from travelin' and meetin' people That was one of the reasons I enlisted in the Army in 1940, to get away from Mississippi and see somethin' of the world.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't the Army in those days almost as segregated as Mississippi?

EVERS: It was pretty bad. All our officers were white, racist whites, and they treated us like dirt. They did everythin' short of callin' us nigger, and you jus' knew they thought nigger. And they always gave us the worst type of assignments latrine cleanin', that sorta thing and imposed really stranglin' restrictions and doled out vicious punishment for the tiniest infractions or for no infractions at all, jus' 'cause they felt like it So it was rough to be a black soldier. But I'll tell you somethin', I was so glad to escape from Mississippi that I put up with it gladly And there was an awful lotta black kids like me, who'd rather be duckin' bullets in a foxhole than livin' the way they was. And then Medgar joined up, too. We were still full of hate in those days, and we figured we'd use the Army to teach us how to kill white folks But within a few months we were in World War Two, and we soon learned what a horrible thing killin' really is

PLAYBOY: Did you see any overseas action?

EVERS: Yeah, more than enough for me—in the South Pacific. At first, though, I was stationed in Hattiesburg, in an all-Negro unit, and in 1942 I was transferred to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. It was there, by the way, I had an affair with a white woman. She was workin' in the PX and we got friendly over coffee and one thing led to another and pretty soon we were in bed. She was the first white woman I ever made love to

PLAYBOY: Was it because she was white that you were attracted to her?

EVERS: No, not really. But she was good for me g'cause she was white, 'cause before I met her, when my mind was still poisoned with all this hate for white folks, I'd say to myself Every white woman I find, I'm gonna take, and I'm gonna do everythin' I can do to her to make up for what they've done to us I wasn't thinkin' of rape, jus' to use 'em for my own pleasure, exploit 'em, degrade 'em But this woman, I found myself gettin' close to her, not as a white woman or a black woman but as a human bein' More than sex came to be involved, and I learned that if a woman loves you and cares about you and worries over you, it don't make no difference what color her skin is So I think she helped defuse some of that hate that had been growin' up inside me, and I'm grateful to her for that.

Anyway, I was sent on to several different camps after that, in Louisiana and Oklahoma, and I was beginnin' to adjust real well to Army life I always had an eye for a fast buck and I found plenty of opportunities to make money in the Army. I'd run crap games in the barracks and sometimes make 25 or 30 bucks a night. And the money I got together I saved, p'cause I never gambled or drank or smoked I didn't like my vices to be expensive. And the money I saved I used to start a loan operation, at 100 percent interest: I'd loan a dollar for a dollar God, I'd do anythin' to earn money: Each GI was allotted a beer ration, and I'd sell mine; if the PX charged 30 cents a bottle, I'd charge 50 cents, and I'd get away with it. I was a good hustler in those days, I'll tell you.

PLAYBOY: When did you go overseas?

EVERS: In g'43, first to Australia and then on to New Guinea, with the combat engineers. Was that a godforsaken place! Nothin' to do but sweat and sleep on the ground and fight off bugs and eat coconuts for nine months You almost got to welcome a Japanese raid as a change from the boredom I broke a knee over there and they reclassified me outa combat into administration, and then I was sent into the Philippines, to Luzon, right after the invasion. I was never scratched, but it was there I really got my face rubbed in the reality of death After the last Jap holdouts had been cleaned out, we moved into Quezon City, a lovely place with old Spanish architecture That was where I really began to rake in the money by operatin' a string of brothels All those combat-weary GIs wanted some action, and I gave it to 'em My biggest house was located on Quezon Boulevard, with about ten girls, all clean and pretty, and I had a chain of small huts and another smaller house downtown. Filipino pimps procured the girls for me, and I treated 'em well, never abused 'em or threatened 'em if they decided to leave I always kept the place clean, with hot and cold runnin' water, and we changed the sheets several times each day I always checked out the customers at the door, and if they was drunk or dirty or lookin' for trouble, I wouldn't let 'em in

PLAYBOY: Did you ever have any moral qualms about your business?

EVERS: Now I'm ashamed. But not then. Even then, though, I never had anythin' to do with the girls personally I could never understand how anybody would want to sleep with a girl who'd had sex with maybe ten other guys that day I mean, think of the diseases you could catch To me it was just a business, and if some folks enjoyed it, I was there to provide a service And I really cleaned up We'd charge enlisted men five dollars for a short time and brass ten dollars. And believe me, I made sure it was a short time. My profits depended on a fast turnover, and I'd rush 'em in and rush 'em out on an assembly-line basis I mean, if a guy stays a half hour, I'm already losin' money Anyway, most of those GIs were no great lovers, and they was generally in and out within ten or fifteen minutes at the most.

PLAYBOY: How much money did you make from your brothels?

EVERS: Over $3000 profit, which to me was a fortune then. And all this time I was goin' to the University of Manila business-law school, where they gave classes in English. It was about this time I met a girl named Felicia. She was half French and part Filipino, and I would've married her, but she was white and I could never take her back to Mississippi with me not unless I wanted to commit suicide She was lovely in every way. And you know, she was such a devout Catholic that she wouldn't dream of ever havin' sex before marriage We was goin' together over a year before she unbent enough to kiss me. And we never did get beyond that. I guess bein' round prostitutes all the time, I welcomed and respected her purity When I was transferred back to the States, she begged me to stay, and I wanted to She

came down to the ship with her parents and her brothers and sisters and she cried and screamed and tried to hold onto me till the very last moment When that ship pulled out, I was sick, physically sick, and I stayed sick for weeks afterward. Wherever she is today, I hope she's happy and well

PLAYBOY: Did you take up brothel keeping again in civilian life?

EVERS: Years later in Chicago, when I was broke, I went back to it for a while But when I got outa the Army, I went home to Decatur, and a little later Medgar came back from France. His French girlfriend was writin' him love letters, and I was gettin' a letter every day from Felicia I tell you, the war sure broadened the outlook of a lotta black Mississippians! I went back to school, finished high school and then went to Alcorn A&M on the GI Bill. The $3000 I'd made in the Philippines I used to start a small taxi business, and I became the official driver for the school A lotta the students on the GI Bill were gettin' their Government checks at this time, so I'd cash the checks for 'em for a 50cent fee. They saved themselves 50 cents that way, 'cause otherwise they'd have had to pay me a dollar to drive 'em into Port Gibson in my taxi to cash their checks So I got 'em comin' and I got 'em goin', and in between my courses, I was pickin' up a pretty buck.

PLAYBOY: What did you study at Alcorn?

EVERS: I took up social studies, and Medgar, who was attendin' along with me, he chose business administration. You'd think it should've been the other way round. But it didn't matter what I was takin', 'cause I was a pretty indifferent student; all I thought about was makin' money. But Medgar was different, he was serious. He was editor of the school paper and a member of the debatin' team, and he made good grades He was studious and disciplined, and all I wanted was to have a good time; I guess I'd been in the Army too long I was really sowin' my wild oats, too Within a couple of months, I'd got three girls pregnant, and the girls were after me, their Playboy Interview parents was after me and my own momma and daddy was after me. The girls kept sayin', "You gotta marry me," but I'd have to have been a Mormon to do right by all three of 'em I told 'em, "I'm not gonna marry any of you!" But finally, this one girl went to the dean and the president of the school, and more out of sheer weariness than anythin' else, I finally agreed to marry her. But we never did live together and we had the thing dissolved after a while But I always recognized all my illegitimate kids I never denied 'em, and I do my best to take care of 'em. After all, they didn't ask me to bring 'em into the world.

PLAYBOY: Were you completely out for yourself at that time, or had you begun to take an interest in politics or civil rights?

EVERS: Can't stay in the sack all the time. No, I was always involved, whether I was hustlin' or studyin' I mean, in Mississippi, civil rights wasn't somethin' you could take up and then put down again when you felt like it It was our lives at stake, and our kids' futures. And after the war, you began to see the first stirrin's of an awakenin' in Mississippi Black GIs who'd gone out and fought for their country came back second-class citizens and they didn't accept it no longer. They knew things could be different, and should be different. In 1946, Medgar and I decided we was gonna register and vote, which was unheard of for black folks in those days Before we went out to the county courthouse to register, we went and told Momma what we was gonna do I can see her still. She was washin' clothes in a tin bucket with homemade lye soap, and she didn't say a word, she jus' stood there churnin' the clothes with an old stick, her lips movin' She was prayin'

Anyway, when we showed up at the county courthouse, they wouldn't let us register. The clerk said, "Who you niggers think you are?" And I told him, "We've grown up here, we've fought for this country and we think we should register." He said no again, and when we insisted, they threatened us. But we kept comin' back and finally they gave in. And then some local racists called on Daddy and they warned him "Your boys better not come vote, 'cause we gon' git 'em if they do." As the election approached, old Bilbo was goin' up and down the state sayin', "The best way to stop niggers from votin' is to visit 'em the night before election." And Medgar and me, we said, "Let 'em come on and visit us. We'll kill 'em if they do." But nobody never came, and on the day of the election Medgar and me and some friends went down to the courthouse to vote, and the place was surrounded by about 200 crackers, all with rifles and shotguns and pistols I never saw so many guns in one place, not even in the Army They was all over the courthouse square and sittin' in their pickup trucks

When we started to go into the courthouse, they blocked us off from the entrance, and we stood there on the courthouse steps, eyeballin' 'em We had guns, too, and I had a long-handled .38 and a switchblade knife in my pockets The old circuit clerk, Mr Brand, he scurried over and said, "Charles, you and Medgar you all go back, you gon' cause trouble." And I said, "Lemme tell you somethin', Mr. Brand. We gon' vote or else we all gon' go to hell It's up to you. Give us our ballots " He just turned tail and hurried away Well, we split up and tried to get in by some of the side entrances, but they was all blocked by gun-carryin' red-necks And then, as I came up to one door, I suddenly spotted a familiar face It was the druggist we'd bought all our drugs and tooth paste from for years. We'd always considered him a friend. So I was glad to see him, and I said hello But he jus' patted the gun in his hip pocket and hissed at me, "Listen, nigger, ain't nothin' happened to you yet." You could jus' hear the hate drip from his words

Somehow, that really hurt, 'cause I'd always thought he was real good folks; I'd believed in that man, and I felt like somethin' died inside me and suddenly I thought, what the hell, I don't care if they kill me, what difference does it make, anyway? I think at that moment I really wanted to die, but I wasn't gonna give those red-necks the satisfaction of knowin' it So I jus' pointed to the .38 stickin' outa my pocket and I flashed my switchblade, and I said, "Ain't nothin' gonna happen to me." And I pushed by him and he didn't do a thing

Once we all finally got inside the courthouse, we got hold of our ballots, but then we found we still couldn't vote, 'cause they'd locked the ballot box inside an office, and they was standin' three deep in front of the entrance I said, "I'm goin' through 'em," but Medgar, he put his hand on my arm and said. "No, Charley, don't try It ain't worth it " He led me away, sayin', "We'll get 'em next time." And as we left, the druggist shouted at us, "You niggers better get away from here 'fore somethin' happens!" I jus' looked at him cold as ice and said, "Ain't nothin' gonna happen to us 'cept what happens to you." And he knew I meant it A bunch of 'em followed us, chantin', "We'll git you tonight, niggers," but we pulled our guns and said, "All right, crackers, we gon' git you. Come on down here— now!" But they were cowards; they was afraid of us, even though they had us outnumbered ten to one, and they turned heel and went away But they taught us an important lesson that day By guardin' that ballot box so tight, they told us there was somethin' vital about votin', that it's the key to power And we never forgot that lesson.

PLAYBOY: How long was it before you were allowed to vote?

EVERS: Jus' one year. We voted in the next county election, in 1947. But we was still the exception at that time, of course Most blacks was still too intimidated to take the risk.

PLAYBOY: When did you and Medgar become active in the NAACP?

EVERS: In the late Forties, when it began organizin' state-wide Meanwhile, we'd both graduated from college, and Medgar had gone to Mound Bayou, a small all-Negro town in the Delta, to sell insurance I went back into the Service durin' the Korean War, and it

was in those days that I married Nan. When I got outa the Army, we moved to Philadelphia, Mississippi, and I worked teachin' school for a while; I taught history and coached football. I got $100 a month. We was livin' over a funeral parlor owned by our uncle, Mark Thomas, and I managed it for him. It was at this time that my daddy got sick over in Decatur, seriously sick. We rushed him to the white hospital in Union, but they wouldn't admit him to a room or a ward like white patients; they jus' stretched him out on a cot in the basement, all damp and dark and crawlin' with rats and roaches. I fought with 'em, I argued and pleaded with 'em to put him in a ward, but they wouldn't listen to me.

That was in '53, and no white hospitals would go outa their way for a black patient. Some wouldn't even put him in the basement; they'd jus' turn him away. Anyway, with proper care, he might've got better, but down in that basement, he jus' wasted away and died. When they called and told me he was dead, I jumped into the hearse and drove to the hospital to get him. I'd had enough experience in the undertakin' business to know how dead bodies was treated, and I didn't want nobody to mess with Daddy's body but me. And when I put his body in the hearse, this white doctor comes up to me and says, "How in hell can you do somethin' like that? If you can pick up your own dead daddy and drive him back, then you ain't got no kind of heart." I jus' told him, "How much heart does it take to put him down in a place like this and let him die?" I took him back to Philadelphia, and I was in sort of a daze. I wanted to embalm him myself, but my family stopped me from that. But I dressed him myself. At church, I finally couldn't hold back anymore, and I jus' broke up and collapsed.

And then, jus' a little while later, almost as if she wanted to follow Daddy, Momma died, too. Those were bad days. I tried to get outside of myself and my grief, and I threw myself into civil rights activity. I kicked off a black voter-registration campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and I was elected voter-registration chairman for the Negroes of Mississippi. I pressed Medgar to be the first Negro to enroll at Ole Miss, and in early 1954 he applied for admission. That really riled every red-neck in the state. His wife Myrlie was afraid they'd try to kill him, but Medgar jus' said, "You have to make sacrifices to make progress." He always believed that, right to the day he sacrificed his life for what he believed in. The board of higher learnin' rejected Medgar's application, but he had become an important symbol to Mississippi blacks, and he was appointed state field secretary for the NAACP, which was preparin' a big push in Mississippi after the Supreme Court's school-desegregation rulin'.

PLAYBOY: Were you working closely with him at that time?

EVERS: Yes, I was, g'specially on voter registration. I was also runnin' several businesses of my own at this time. In addition to my colored cab company, the first in the state, I had a burial-insurance business, as well as runnin' my uncle's funeral parlor. I also ran a small hotel with a café, which gave local black folks the first chance in their life to have a Coke or milk shake while they was sittin' down; always before, they could only buy 'em from a takeout stand at the white drugstore. I was also the first black disc jockey in Mississippi, on station WHOC, and I had a large, loyal audience. And I'd always urge black folks over the air to go out and pay their poll tax and register to vote. The white racists was mad about that, and they was also mad that I was on my way to becomin' a successful businessman with a healthy bank balance. Nothin' riles 'em more than seein' a black man make good, 'specially a black man who won't crawl to 'em and shuffle and beg. So they saw me as a threat, and a bunch of 'em started out to destroy me financially. And they succeeded. They pressured the owner of my hotel and restaurant not to renew my lease, and they arranged it so I couldn't renew my cab license either. Then they hassled the man who sold me caskets and first he cut off my credit and then refused to sell to me at all.

They also manufactured incidents, like they'd drive their cars into the side of my hearse or one of my cabs, and then they'd sue me for damages. And in those local white courts, they wouldn't have no trouble collectin', neither. Finally, after suin' me several times, they got a judgment of $5000 against me and I just couldn't raise the money to pay it, so they took all my possessions and attached all my property. They stripped our house bare of furniture and auctioned it all off. I lost everythin'. They even put so much pressure on Mr. Cole, the owner of the radio station, that I resigned my job there rather than see him lose his advertisin' and go broke. I was completely cleaned out. We didn't even have enough money to get outa Philadelphia, so our friends and neighbors took a collection and they raised $26 in pennies and dimes. I sent my wife and our kids off to her mother's house and I headed for Flint, Michigan, to find a job. My money ran out in Chicago, so I stayed on there at my sister's place. That was 1956, and I stayed in Chicago until 1963.

PLAYBOY: Were you inactive in the civil rights movement during that period?

EVERS: No, not completely. I still visited Mississippi regular, and I'd help out any way I could when I was there, and I kept in close touch with Medgar on issues of strategy and organization. We was always jawin' over the phone about one thing or another. But in the beginnin', my main thought was gettin' enough money to keep my family together. It was rough at first. I worked as a men's-room attendant in the Conrad Hilton at night for a salary of three dollars and a percentage of the tips, and durin' the day I worked in a meat-packin' house in the stockyards for $60 a week. And I was in a mean mood those days. Any drunk come in the hotel washroom, I'd roll him quick, have his wallet out, empty it and back in his pocket before he ever guessed what was happenin'. And after a while, I drifted into the numbers racket as a policy runner. I was more or less workin' for the Syndicate, but eventually I got my own personal operation goin' right under their nose. I was never greedy, but I skimmed off $400 to $500 a week. I was never arrested, neither; I kept the cops paid off and stayed outa trouble. I ran some girls for a while, too, but I got outa that after a year or so. After a while, I was back on my feet again and had some money in the bank, so I got outa the numbers game and I invested my money. I bought three bars, and I also got into the jukebox business, though the Syndicate tried to frighten me away. I also ran an after-hours place called The Club House, and ran a good boot-leggin' business on the side. And all the while, I was also teachin' school; I taught history and physical education in Robbins, Illinois, an old black town outside of Chicago. I must've been the only policy-runnin', bootleggin' schoolteacher in Illinois!

PLAYBOY: What did Medgar think of your illegal activities?

EVERS: Well, like I told you, much as Medgar and I loved each other, we was two different people with two different outlooks on life. I'd send him money all along—he never had nothin'—but I didn't have the heart to tell him where it came from. He would've thought it was dirty money, and he would've been right. Medgar was a saintly man; he wasn't interested in money, only in justice for our people. I used to argue with him and urge him to stress black business development more, 'cause without green power, you never gonna have no real black power. You can't spend civil rights, and a man ain't really free unless he has economic freedom as well as political and social freedom. Medgar always used to say get the vote, and I'd say get the dollar. We was both right. But there was really no fundamental difference between me and Medgar, jus' a difference of emphasis. It's funny, you know, I could never do some of the things today I did back in Chicago. Not 'cause I'm so pure or nothin', but after Medgar's death, somethin' happened to me. I felt he had to live on through me, and I had to live my life in a way he'd be proud of. That's why I'm a reformed hustler. I don't wanna let Medgar down, or the principles

he died for
PLAYBOY: Did you feel you'd let him down by not being there when he was killed?
EVERS: That's somethin' I can never forgive myself for. I've accepted my daddy's death, and my momma's death, and my sister Ruth's death, but I've never been able to accept Medgar's death, 'cause I wasn't there I know everybody says I couldn't have prevented it if I'd been there, and that's probably true But in my heart, I can never accept the fact that I wasn't there beside him Never
PLAYBOY: How did you react to the news of his murder?
EVERS: God, it's still like a nightmare, jus' thinkin' about it. I'd spoken to Medgar on the phone jus' three days before his death and he'd said to me, "Now, Charley, be careful, 'cause it's worse there than it is here." And I said, "No, you're the one to be careful, 'cause you know all those Kluxers down there are after you for registerin' all those black folks. And if they can stop you, they'll feel like they've got everythin' under control " But he said, "Don't worry about me, I'm gonna make it You jus' be careful." And, I don't know, maybe we both sensed somethin', 'cause suddenly we was both cryin' over the phone So I said, "Look, you want me to come on down there?" And he said, "No, you're due to come anyway next week." That was Sunday, and that Wednesday I came home around three A M and as I drove up, I saw all the lights were on in our house I knew somethin' was wrong, and I pulled out my gun—I always packed a gun in Chicago—and ran up to the porch.

Inside, the house was filled with people, and Nan came up to me and said quietly, "Come on back here, Charles," and pulled me toward a back room "What's wrong?" I asked. "Somethin' happen to Medgar?" I think I'd suspected it from the beginnin'. "Yes," Nan said, "they shot him." "Well," I said, "they probably jus' winged him. They can't kill the Evers boys; they been tryin' for years " "No, Charles," Nan told me softly, "he's dead." And I don't remember anythin' after that till I got off a plane in Jackson the next mornin' I must've been in a state of shock My daughter told me later that I'd told her, "I'll never come back to Chicago. I ain't comin' back. I shouldn't have left Mississippi in the first place." And God, how all that old hatred of the white man poured back I thought I'd outgrown it, but now it was stronger than ever But most of all I hated Charles Evers, 'cause I couldn't free myself of the feelin' that if I'd been there with Medgar, I might've saved his life I carried a gun, and I kept thinkin' I might've done somethin' That thought ate away at me; it wouldn't let me sleep at night.
PLAYBOY: Medgar was shot from hiding by a high-powered rifle. What difference would your presence have made?
EVERS: I know, I know, that's what Nan tells me; that's what everybody tells me But it still don't free me of that guilt And what a cowardly way to kill a good man like Medgar, shootin' him in the back from some bushes. Jus' a few weeks before, they'd fire-bombed his house, you know, and after that, Medgar trained his kids to drop flat to the floor whenever they heard an unusual noise. He tried to turn it into a game, sayin', "That's what Daddy did in the Army " But they knew it wasn't a game, and they'd say to him all the time, "Daddy, please be careful " And he'd get all those death threats on his phone, jus' like I do today He'd try to talk to 'em, but they jus' hung up And then that night around 12:30, he pulled up outside the house, got out of the car and the bastard shot him in the back When his wife ran to open the door, he was lyin' there dyin' on the front steps in a pool of blood The children saw it all, and over and over again, they begged him to get up But he was dead. Medgar was dead
PLAYBOY: Byron de la Beckwith, an arch segregationist Greenwood businessman, was tried for the murder and released after two hung juries. Do you think that was another example of "Mississippi justice"?
EVERS: Of course it was. Beckwith's fingerprints were found on the murder weapon; his car was placed at the scene; in any other state, he would've been convicted of first-degree murder. But to a great many white Mississippians, Beckwith was a hero I remember when they was impanelin' the jurors at his trial, the first question the prosecutor asked potential jurors was, "Do you believe it's a crime for a white man to kill a nigger?" And they had quite a delay in the proceedin's until they could find 12 Mississippi whites who did—or at least were willin' to say they did While the trial was on, Governor Ross Barnett came into the courtroom and shook Beckwith's hand and hugged him And General Edwin Walker, the Bircher, came all the way down from Dallas to congratulate Beckwith and lend him his support When Beckwith was let off and returned to his home town of Greenwood, he was greeted with big welcomin' signs and cheers, everythin' but ticker tape He ran for lieutenant governor a few years back, and although he lost, he got a big vote What a way to make a reputation

"In Chicago, I drifted into the numbers racket. Ran some girls for a while too. But after Medgar's death, something happened to me. I felt I had to live my life in a way he'd be proud of."

PLAYBOY: What would you do if you came face to face with Medgar's murderer today?
EVERS: Well, I can tell you what I would've done a few years ago: I would've killed him Jus' like that I would've broke his dirty slimy neck But I think—I hope, anyway—that if I saw him today, I'd just pity him I may be a sinner, but I'm also a religious man, and I believe that if he doesn't get his punishment in this life, he'll get it in the next. But I'd fight to control my own emotions, 'cause if I resorted to violence, I'd be just as low as he was I think I've done more to kill Medgar's killer by registerin' 200,000 blacks across the state, by bein' elected mayor of Fayette and by runnin' for governor than if I put a bullet through him. 'Cause when he killed Medgar, he thought he was killin' black progress in this state But he didn't. We're ten times stronger today than we was then, and we'll be even stronger

tomorrow

PLAYBOY: Why did you decide to take over Medgar's role as state NAACP leader?

EVERS: I felt so guilty about not bein' with Medgar when they killed him that I wanted with all my heart to carry on his work. I couldn't desert him a second time. So the day before Medgar's funeral in Jackson, when some black people was tryin' to find somebody to lead the movement, I told 'em, "You don't have to look any further, 'cause I'm gon' take his place." I didn't give a damn for his title, but I was determined to see his work go forward. The NAACP national office in New York wasn't too happy about it; there's never been too much love lost between me and Roy Wilkins, 'cause he can't control me. But they couldn't do much else other than accept it, since the local people were all behind me. But I tell you, it wasn't easy for me to go on. I jus' prayed I wouldn't have a breakdown, 'cause I knew Medgar would've expected me to keep goin'. But I was filled with such hate, hate for myself and for white folks, it was like a sickness.

PLAYBOY: Did you entertain any thoughts of going after Medgar's killer yourself?

EVERS: I wanted to kill any white man then. I planned to revive the idea Medgar and I had when we was kids of formin' a Mau Mau band and roamin' round the state killin' a white man at random once a week, always in a different part of the state and with a different weapon each time. Some I'd shoot, others I'd stab, others I'd poison. I'd pick the leadin' racists in each county and knock g'em off one by one. Jus' killin' the man who murdered Medgar wouldn't have been enough. I was really hungry for white folks' blood. I must've been a little unhinged after Medgar's death, 'cause I was really serious about the whole thing. I even stockpiled some guns and ammunition.

But in the back of my mind, somethin' always held me back. I could hear Medgar's soft voice whisperin', p"That's not the way, Charles, that's not the way." And finally, that murderous mood passed away. I came to realize that if I let p'em turn me into a black racist, if I learned to hate all white people blindly, jus' like Klansmen hate all black people, then they would've won, and Medgar and everythin' he stood for would've lost. So I decided to fight white racism economically and politically, by registerin' black voters and electin' black candidates to office, not by killin' nobody or creatin' more violence and more polarization. I know now that's what Medgar would've wanted me to do, and all that hate sickness has gone outa my mind. I can't say that the scars Medgar's death left me with are healed, 'cause they never will be. But I don't think of revenge no more. And I was helped a great deal in those dark months after Medgar's death by two men I grew very close to—Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy. I never dreamed when we were together that they'd be cut down just like Medgar within a few years.

PLAYBOY: What was your relationship with Dr. King?

EVERS: I'd never met him until Medgar's funeral, but we liked each other right away and soon became close friends. Whenever he was organizin' a march or demonstration or an organizational project, I'd try to help him out, and he'd do the same for me in Mississippi. He was a fine man, and he did a lot of good. Maybe the most important contribution he made was to awaken the conscience of moderate American whites, people who'd closed their eyes too long to the plight of the black man. He was a moral leader of the highest caliber, a really good man, a pure man. That's why it was so sickenin' when J. Edgar Hoover floated that rumor that he had files and recordin's of Martin with women. Now, Martin was a minister, but he was also a human bein' and a normal man, and even if he did have a hankerin' for women, what business is it of that shriveled-up old tyrant J. Edgar Hoover? Lord knows, nobody could ever accuse him of likin' women. Why doesn't somebody check his sex life out? But instead of tryin' to protect Martin's life, he was busy havin' his agents invade his privacy and try to blackmail him.

PLAYBOY: There seems to be a consensus among black leaders that Dr. King's murder was the result of a well-organized conspiracy. Do you agree?

EVERS: Of course I do. I think anybody with any sense does. And James Earl Ray has admitted as much. If you follow his movements all across America and Canada and Europe and the large sums of money that were available to him and the forged passports and travel documents and the circumstances of the shootin' itself, you can't come to any other conclusion. This was a dumb petty criminal whose only talent was he was a good shot. He was a loser; he'd never even managed to stick up a gas station before, and suddenly he's travelin' all over the world like James Bond. There was big money behind King's death, white-racist money. King knew they wanted him dead; he'd come to accept the idea philosophically. And they got him.

PLAYBOY: You said earlier that your capacity for Dr. King's kind of nonviolence goes only so far. How far?

EVERS: I'm not quite as absolute on it as Martin was, or Gandhi before him. Maybe it's jus' my temperament. I remember once before the James Meredith march, Martin spent a week with me in my home in Jackson, which was full of guns—rifles, pistols, even automatic weapons—'cause we'd had a lotta threats and harassment and I wasn't takin' no chances. And Martin, he said to me, "Charles, I'm nonviolent, but I feel safer when I'm around you than I do with anybody. I know you got plenty of protection." God, when I think of him goin' out on that motel balcony in Memphis for a breath of fresh air and gettin' drilled through the head, it was like Medgar all over again. But one thing about both Martin and Medgar, the hope and spirit they inspired in people won't die with 'em. But it was a terrible blow jus' the same. When we were at Martin's funeral in Atlanta, I jus' broke down again, like I did back at Medgar's funeral, and I felt the same way. But Bobby and Ethel Kennedy was with me, and they consoled me; they helped me pull myself together.

PLAYBOY: By all accounts, you developed a remarkably close relationship with Robert Kennedy. And yet, on the surface, at least, no two men could have been less alike. How do you account for it?

EVERS: We was different in background and education and power, but we also was similar in a lotta ways. We was both tough, aggressive, ambitious and—most important of all—we both had brothers who were assassinated.

PLAYBOY: How did you get to know the Kennedys?

EVERS: Medgar and I had campaigned for John in Mississippi in 1960, when very few black leaders were supportin' him, and that was how we first met John and Bobby, though at the beginnin' it was jus' a political alliance, not real friendship. I met and talked with the President several times, but I could never say I was close to him. But right after Medgar's death, he called me to the White House and we sat and talked about Medgar. I remember him sayin', "I will do anything I can to keep something like this from happening again. We can't let your brother die in vain." Five months later, they blew his brains out in Dallas. After Medgar was shot, Bobby would telephone me, and when his brother was murdered the same way, I rushed to the phone and told him I was comin' to be by his side, and I stayed with him in Washington durin' his darkest moments. We'd already become friends, but then we really grew close. And over the years, we became like brothers. I loved that man.

PLAYBOY: Did it brother you that his initial record on civil rights was rather equivocal?

EVERS: Yeah, but unlike so many others, Bobby had the ability to grow, to change his mind and learn from his mistakes. When I first got to know him, he was jus' like any other white politician. He

wasn't a racist, but he was arrogant and he was vain and he didn't think the problems of poor people or black people were his problems But he began to find out they were, and he began to change his ideas. I think the biggest reason for that change was the fact he was very warm and human deep inside, despite his reputation for bein' cold and ruthless, and he could reach out to people with real understandin' and compassion Once he found out about the awful conditions black people live under in this country, he was moved to do somethin' about it He had a strong sense of responsibility, and he came to deeply believe it was his duty to improve the lot of black Americans, and poor Americans of all races

I remember once we were on a tour of the poverty areas in the Mississippi Delta, and he sat down on some rickety old bed in a sharecropper's shack outside of Greenville, and tears just streamed from his eyes "I'm going back to Washington and do something about this," he promised And that was one thing about Bobby If he said he was gonna do somethin', he'd do it You could always trust him; he'd never break his word to you or let you down the minute your back was turned That's why I had so much faith in him, and why I campaigned for him when he ran for the Senate in New York and when he ran for the Presidency in '68. Things would've been a lot different in this country if that man had been elected President, I'll tell you that But in the end, they got him, too

PLAYBOY: You were with Kennedy in Los Angeles when he was assassinated Can you describe that night?

EVERS: Well, it's still hard for me to talk about it, 'cause he meant so much to me In a way, he was the country's last hope, and it jus' don't make any sense It's so insane, such a waste I remember the night he was shot, we was all sittin' round in his suite at the Ambassador listenin' to the returns come in, showin' that he'd won the California primary And that meant that the road was clear to the nomination, and maybe to the White House. And everybody was happy and relaxed And then we heard the crowd in the ballroom chantin', "We want Kennedy! We want Kennedy!" and we could see 'em dancin' round on the TV.

Bobby got up to go downstairs and make his victory speech, but first he walked up to each of us who'd worked with him and shook our hand and thanked us. I jus' told him, "Don't thank me I'm doin' what I'm doin' 'cause I believe in you." And then he started for the door with Rosey Grier and Rafer Johnson and his staff and when I jus' sat there, he said, "Charles, aren't you going?" And I told him, "No, you don't need all your black boys with you I'm gonna stay behind and watch you from here " He said, "Aw, come on " I said I'd rather relax and watch him on TV and he said OK and left.

But the minute the door closed behind him, I had a funny feelin', a feelin' I should go along with him and I should be with him, like I should've been with Medgar So I jumped up and went down after him and pushed my way through the crowd toward the speaker's platform and crooked one of my fingers—a kind of signal we used—and he nodded in recognition Then he made his speech and there was more cheerin' and balloons all over the place, and he made his way off the platform. Bodies was packed so thick it was hard to follow him; I was only about five feet away, but I could hardly move. I waved my hand at him to indicate I'd catch up later and that instant I heard that phat-phat sound I thought it was balloons breakin' and suddenly the crowd jus' writhed like a livin' thing and somebody shrieked, "Oh, my God, they shot the Senator!"

All I knew was I had to get to Bobby and I jus' plowed through that crowd like a football player knockin' down anybody who got in my way When I got to Bobby, Ethel was crouched over him screamin' and there was puddles of blood, blood everywhere, and I could see the head wound and I knew he was gone I don't know, somethin' jus' seemed to drain outa me then; jus' like when Medgar died, it was like part of me was dyin' with him And we got him to the hospital and some people still had hope, people who hadn't seen him, but I'd seen that head wound and for Bobby's sake, I prayed that he wouldn't make it, because with that kind of brain damage, he could never be anythin' more than a vegetable So I wanted him to go clean. I don't know, even talkin' about it brings tears to my eyes When Frank Mankiewicz came out and told us he was dead, even though I expected it, I still couldn't believe it. In a way, I still can't

Sometimes the phone rings and I'll look up and for a second if I'm overtired or lost in work I'll wonder if it's Bobby Or Martin Or Medgar Three times—everybody who was really close to me, everybody who offered hope. After Bobby, I had to hold myself together real tight, 'cause I knew I could go either way either I'd jus' give up or I'd double my efforts for what they believed in, to carry on their work And I took the second road I feel a li'l bit of each of 'em is still alive inside me, you know, jus' like a prod goadin' me on And I tell you somethin', I got no death wish or nothin' like that, but if I go, I wanna go jus' like each of 'em, not in my bed old and senile but fightin' and kickin' to the end for a good cause.

PLAYBOY: Are you as close to Teddy as you were to Bobby?

EVERS: No. I like and respect Teddy and we get along fine, but we never developed the same personal relationship as me and Bobby But I've stayed very close to Ethel; we phone each other and visit when I'm in Washington. She's a wonderful woman, strong as a rock.

PLAYBOY: What did you do after Bobby's assassination?

EVERS: I went back to Mississippi. There was nothin' I could do on the national scene, now that Bobby was gone That was when I decided to run for mayor of Fayette and show white folks we could run a town where we was in the majority, and run it well and fair

PLAYBOY: What changes have taken place in Fayette in the two years since you were elected?

EVERS: The difference is like night and day. Ten years ago, if a black man was drivin' through Fayette, he jus' prayed his car wouldn't break down Fayette was one of the most racist towns in the whole South They had several old white policemen, they was practically illiterate, and their sole job was to keep the niggers in their place And they'd do it with as much brutality as they wanted Why, blacks wasn't even allowed to wear a white shirt on the street unless they was a minister or a teacher, 'cause it was a sign they was bein' "uppity "

And economically, the town was a disaster area; nothin' was bein' done to bring in outside industry and increase employment When I took office, 60 percent of the blacks in Fayette was on welfare and most of the rest was unemployed or underemployed The segregated school system was even worse than most other places in Mississippi, if that's possible, and no black child could get any kind of a decent education But if you visit Fayette today, you won't even recognize the town of jus' two years ago We've been able to bring in new industry, give people jobs and take 'em off welfare, give 'em a new lease on life

ITT is settin' up an automobile electrical-components plant that will employ 150 people with a monthly payroll of $40,000; the Commercial Chemical Corporation has built a half-million-dollar factory; and a concrete-manufacturin' company has come in with a plant to produce concrete for home construction We're also puttin' together a $6,000,000 health program with Federal grants, which'll be the first time black folks in this area have ever had decent medical or dental care, and we got a Ford Foundation loan of $400,000 for town development

Our main goal is to completely kill off welfare in Jefferson

County, and we've set up a vocational school to train unskilled blacks in carpentry, brick masonry, concrete work and weldin' and electrician techniques I own a motel and restaurant and the Medgar Evers Shopping Center, which employs 20 people—and at livable wages, not the old starvation wages the white merchants used to pay But it's not jus' the economic benefits comin' in that's important; it's the whole atmosphere of the town. For the first time, black people feel they have a community of their own that they can take pride in buildin' and improvin'. We're gettin' black youngsters involved in community work, and it's givin' 'em a new sense of self-respect Black people hold their heads high in Fayette today

PLAYBOY: What about the town's whites? How do you treat them?

EVERS: Same as blacks. I don't want Fayette to be an all-black town. The Kluxers been tryin' to segregate us for years; why should we turn round now and do their job for 'em? I employ white as well as black people on the town payroll ten of 'em, in fact The only way I judge a man is by his intentions and his efforts, not the color of his skin I'm an integrationist, remember that, and I won't have no truck with separatism, whether it's a Kluxer preachin' it or a so-called black militant We're creatin' somethin' wonderful and important here in Fayette a genuinely biracial town where blacks and whites can live together in harmony and mutual respect. And it's vital we succeed, 'cause Fayette is a testin' ground, a chance to see if reason and tolerance can win out over the extremists on both sides

Fayette, you know and this is so important to remember is a microcosm of Mississippi, in a raw form, a microcosm of the sickness that infects the country as a whole. If we can lick it in Fayette, we can lick it in the state, and if we can lick it in the state, we can lick it in the nation But if we fail in Fayette, if we're allowed to go down the drain 'cause of hate and indifference, then a lot more than Fayette will be lost That's why I'm runnin' for governor of Mississippi, to try to make the state capital in Jackson a second Fayette. And we can do it We gotta do it

PLAYBOY: Do you really believe you have a chance to win the governorship?

EVERS: Yes, I do. The odds are against us, but we could win, and I'll tell you how What we need is a coalition, a coalition of blacks and white moderates. Now, blacks make up 37 percent of Mississippi's population, and we've got 275,000 of 'em registered to vote. Then there's a growin' number of white moderates fed up with racism and ready for a change. I'm hopin' that what they've read and seen of our work in Fayette will convince 'em that I'd be a responsible governor for all the people. A few years ago, I got 4000 white votes in a local Congressional race when most whites didn't really know much about me, and I hope to increase my percentage in November And a third factor in our favor is the 18-year-old vote Many white kids are fed up with the system, and I hope to get their votes, too. So if all of these three groups the white moderates, the blacks and the young support me, I could well be this state's next governor

That's a big if, of course Hell, you can't even count on the black vote down here. You gotta get 'em to the polls and also persuade 'em you're the best man for the job Not every black man will vote black, by any reckonin'. But if we can deliver 250,000 black votes, 25,000 young whites, plus 25,000 white-moderate votes, we've got a total of 300,000 votes, and 300,000 will win any election in this state. So that's what we're aimin' for It's a gamble, sure, but one thing Bobby taught me was that life itself is a gamble And I think we're gonna win. We're gonna turn this state around and head it into the 20th Century. And it's gonna be one hell of an adventure

Mark my words, you're gonna see more real racial progress here in Mississippi in the next few years than anywhere else in the country 'Cause vicious as the race hate has been down here, it's become like a boil that's ripe to bust, and when it does, all the poison will drain away and the scars will heal and we can start fresh I believe in that with all my heart and soul. All the sufferin', all the deprivation, all the murders and misery ain't been in vain A new day's dawnin' down here, and it's gonna spread its light all over the country I only wish Medgar was gonna be around to see it. And Martin, and Bobby, and all the others But they're all part of it, God rest their souls

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DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS?
Adventurous, passionate and friendly

WERE YOU EXCITED TO SHOOT FOR PLAYBOY?
Absolutely! I was so thrilled at the opportunity! It has been a dream of mine for quite some time I think it's a dream for many girls!

WHAT WAS IT LIKE STARTING OUT AS A MODEL?
I was a little camera shy. I'm a small town girl and was shy as a child but modeling has become a wonderful outlet for me It's so fun, you just have to let go and go with it!

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A MODEL SO FAR?
It was a bit overwhelming at first. The modeling industry is such a big industry full of gorgeous talented women It can be quite intimidating, especially at first. I've met so many amazing and kind women and men though, which isn't what is thought of as the norm in this business It's not so overwhelming now

DESCRIBE THE PERFECT DAY OFF WHEN YOU WERE NOT MODELING.
I would definitely say a day of "self care" would be ideal! A good, tough workout in the morning followed by a nice, refreshing spa facial! Then a patio lunch with my little dog, JoJo and my girlfriends! Maybe a walk at the dog park before a little shopping Then dinner and a few cocktails with friends! A full day of activities sound perfect to me!

DO YOU FEEL MORE LIKE A CITY PERSON OR A COUNTRY PERSON?
Hmm that's kind of a hard one I think I'm a little of both growing up in a super small town. I love being outdoors and the fresh air but I also love the city! I thrive on social interactions and love going out in the city!

IF YOU COULD LIVE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
Greece It's absolutely stunning there!

DO YOU HAVE A SECRET TALENT?
I don't know if I would call it a secret talent but I make the best pancakes!! I can also make a four leaf clover with my tongue! Haha!

..A GUILTY PLEASURE?
Pancakes

WHICH SONG IS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN TO MAKE YOU CRY WHENEVER YOU HEAR IT?
"Oceans" by Hillsong. Although "Gone Away" by Five Finger Death Punch is a very intense song for me

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WORD IN ANY LANGUAGE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
Bellissimo in Italian. It means very beautiful, lovely

ANY LAST WORDS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE READERS?
Less phone, more person interaction. Less indoors; more nature. Stay active A healthy body equals a healthier mindset and life

Playboy Advisor How Do I Unlock the Pleasure of the Prostate?

Playboy's resident male sexpert, Bobby Box, is here to drop some carnal knowledge on the ever-elusive prostate orgasm.

BY **BOBBY BOX** PHOTO BY **LANA VESHTA**

Q: *I'm a 27-year-old woman in a heterosexual relationship, and I would like to bring up the topic of prostate play to my partner He's pretty sexually open-minded, and we've talked a few times about exploring beyond penis-in-vagina penetration. What's the best way to communicate my curiosity in prostate play without scaring him or making him feel uncomfortable? T L ,*

You mention your man is sexually open-minded, so approach the conversation casually don't plan a speech or anything. It's 2020, and butt stuff is finally being acknowledged in the mainstream as a legitimate source of sexual pleasure, even among heterosexual men who've been under the impression that anal play is "gay." This belief system, of course, has homophobic roots, and it isn't a cute look on anyone. The prostate is a gland, not a sexual orientation

A survey from sex toy manufacturer LELO found that 71 percent of straight men in relationships have tried, or would like to try, prostate play, and 80 percent of women are open to sharing in that experience. Since men who incorporate prostate play into their sexual routine can experience orgasms up to 33 percent stronger, this has potential to be a total game changer and a fun way to mix up the dynamics in your sexual relationship

Of course, consent is what's most important here, so whatever you do, do not shove a finger up his unexpecting ass. This will effectively diminish any future attempts at anal play. Instead, start by complimenting his bum Playfully pinch or squeeze it when you're together. His reaction will help you get a better sense of his comfort level

The next time you're chatting (in person or through text) and the conversation gets hot and heavy, throw out the idea that you'd like to try something something you think he would really enjoy (Knock on the back door before opening it, if you will) Ask if he'd be open to butt play and tell him how hot you think it would be. If he knows the idea turns you on, he may be more receptive to being...receptive

If his cues are positive, you can start by stimulating the prostate externally through the perineum the swath of skin between the balls and the b-hole the next time you're intimate. Next time you're giving him a blow job, gently rub the area (it will feel like a plum) in a circular motion and gauge his reaction. It's a noninvasive way to test the waters and, provided he's loving this new trick, will further open his mind and his cheeks to a well-lubed finger (trim your nails prior!) or a toy, such as a prostate massager

If he's not receptive, don't force it on him. Sex is best when all parties are actively enthusiastic about what's taking place

Q: *I'm a freshly out-of-the-closet gay male in my early 30s, and I've never experienced an anal orgasm or prostate orgasm. I would like to experiment alone before I engage with a partner, and I wanted to know if you had any tips for the best toys or lubes to use for stimulation? What is the safest way to go solo? S P,*

As somebody who came out in his late 20s, I can totally relate to your experience. Truth be told, it took me some time before I was completely comfortable with anal sex and it took even longer until I became confident.

I think it's a great idea to experiment with anal sex toys before engaging in penetrative partnered sex It helps you get to know your body at a rate you're comfortable with without the pressure of rushing into anything

The anal sex toy market is expansive and can be overwhelming, but the category can effectively be summed up in four parts: butt plugs, prostate massagers, anal beads and dilation kits All have their own merits and only through trial and error can you decide which is best for you.

Before paying for a sex toy, however, I suggest you explore your prostate with your fingers and discover which sensations feel best Enter about three or four inches in your rectum with a lubricated finger and gently play around in the area. The prostate has a distinct texture (like a soft walnut) and you'll know when you've hit it Many say prostate massage feels like the begin-

ning of an orgasm. If you feel a sudden urge to urinate, you may be applying too much pressure. The sensations you enjoy during this time can offer valuable intel when purchasing a sex toy. Also, it's free!

Since you say you've never experienced an anal or prostate orgasm, I recommend you start with a dilation kit. These are a series of anal sex toys—often butt plugs—of graduated sizes designed to get your bum accustomed to anal play at a comfortable pace.

When you feel like moving to the next toy in the set (which is slightly larger), insert a finger alongside your current toy first. If the finger slides in without resistance, that's your green light to upsize. If it's uncomfortable, stick with the current toy for another day or two. Your body will let you know when it's ready.

If your goal is to experience a prostate orgasm, prostate massagers have an intentional curve designed to directly stimulate the prostate. They also tend to have fun vibration settings for added stimulation. I recommend the LELO Hugo or LOKI Wave, the latter of which is the first prostate massager to offer the beloved "come hither" motion that's largely favored for prostate play.

Now let's talk lube, which is absolutely necessary when using sex toys. Water-based lubes are the most versatile of the bunch and can be used with a wide spectrum of materials. However, they don't last as long as other lubricants and you will likely have to reapply, which can be a pain in the butt (wink). If you do opt for a water-based lube, choose a thick or gel-based formula, as they tend to last longer. Try Tush Cush by Cake, which is a water-based jelly made specifically for butt-stuff beginners.

Silicone-based lubes are longer-lasting and largely favored for anal sex because of their silky texture and glide. If you choose a silicone lube (Cake's Backside Slide is my go-to) don't use it with silicone sex toys, as it can deteriorate the material.

Hybrid lubes (see: Ride Silk Hybrid) are another fine option. These are largely water-based lubricants made with a small amount of silicone so you can get the desired texture that silicone lubes offer while being able to use them with silicone sex toys.

Lastly, you can also use an oil-based lube, which is the longest lasting but also the most difficult to clean. Though you may not be using barriers with your sex toys, it's important to note that oil-based lubes are not condom compatible, nor should they be used with plastic or latex toys.

Q: *I enjoy being a recipient of prostate play in my relationship, but I have yet to orgasm from it even though I find it highly pleasurable. Is it normal to never experience a p-orgasm despite being comfortable and aroused? Is there something I could be doing differently?*—G G,

What may be occurring here is that you are experiencing a prostate orgasm, but not seeing any "evidence" of it in the form of ejaculate. This is fairly common. Prostate orgasms can occur in the absence of ejaculation—some refer to these as "dry orgasms." Another thing about prostate orgasms: They can happen over and over again with no grace period. Many have multiple orgasms without seeing any semen at all. Because you mention you're comfortable and find the experience highly pleasurable, this could be what's happening.

Beyond that, I want to emphasize that we should stop being so goal-oriented about sex. An orgasm does not a sexually gratifying experience make! When we approach sex with a goal in mind (e.g. orgasm) it can suck the fun out of the experience. As the saying goes, "Life is about the journey, not the destination."

If an orgasm does happen, great. If it doesn't, no biggie. Did you have fun? Did it feel good? That's all that matters. We get so caught up in these arbitrary rules that it can take us out of the experience and leave us feeling guilty. Sex is about pleasure, not

The anal sex toy market is expansive and can be overwhelming, but the category can effectively be summed up in four parts: butt plugs, prostate massagers, anal beads and dilation kits.

If an orgam does happen, great. If it doesn't, no biggie. Did you have fun? Did it feel good? That's all that matters.

shame! That being said, if you think the issue could be that your prostate is not being stimulated in a way that brings you to orgasm, there are a few things you can try

Try stimulating the prostate externally, then internally Try both at the same time (though you will likely need a toy to do this). Some find it easier to experience a prostate orgasm while they're stroking their shaft

Next, play around with how you're touching your prostate, applying different pressure. Try the "come hither" motion, then try some gentle taps Try tracing around the entire gland in circles, and try a vibrator. You may find that one technique or a combination of many is what it takes to produce a prostate orgasm You can even change your positioning You can enter doggy style, on your back, lying on your side and so on. Lift your leg or place a pillow under your hips if it helps There is no one universal way to have a prostate orgasm, but it can be a lot of fun finding out which techniques work best for you

Has the Definition of Cheating Changed with Coronavirus?

Playboy talks to several couples, singles and clinicians about the heightened emotional and physical fallout of infidelity

BY **SOPHIE SAINT THOMAS**

PHOTO BY **ZENZA FLARINI**

On January 20, the first American developed Covid-19 symptoms shortly after returning from Wuhan, China At the time, the story was a blip in the news cycle, and the great citizens of this country continued swapping spit and gargling cum none the wiser By March 13, Donald Trump declared a national emergency. Covid became a household name. And on top of worrying about toilet paper and, you know, dying, those households had to figure out how to maintain a healthy sex life when a dystopian future became the present

Publications and relationship experts began speculating that divorce rates would skyrocket due to couples stuck inside with nothing to do but notice each other's crotches become hairier and smellier For many folks, despite the risks of outside human contact, cheating on their significant other was a much-needed outlet. We often become selfish in our efforts to maintain a lust for life "For the most part, I've seen cheating behaviors go up," says psychologist and sex therapist Holly Richmond "I think a lot of that is because we lost that external focus of jobs, vacations and business travel "

Variety is the spice of (your sex) life. It doesn't mean you have to go full poly, but there's a valid case for trying new positions, wearing wigs and pretending to be Russian spies, having sex in your kid's bed, whatever. "We can't forget that fire needs air," Richmond says. "To create that resemblance of desire, we need that newness, that novelty that most humans need to feel turned on That's really fucking hard to do when you're stuck in the same room as someone for months on end and there's nothing you can do about it."

Variety is the spice of (your sex) life. It doesn't mean that you have to go full poly, but there's a valid case for trying new positions, or wearing wigs and pretending to be Russian spies.

Now, writing this as a sex-positive queer millennial in favor of ethical nonmonogamy, I must admit that I consider cheating old-fashioned. But it turns out, cheating can save a marriage just like an open arrangement can There's an old gendered expression that says men cheat to stay in a relationship, while women cheat to leave I asked James Hamilton*, a man in his mid-50s who lives outside Concord, New Hampshire if cheating during quarantine helped save his marriage. "Yes is all I can say. Big time," he says He cheated before Covid began because, although his marriage was doing fine, he had sex with his wife only once every six months But he's stepped up his game since Covid hit

"I've connected with two other women. a local single mom whom I met in May on Seeking Arrangement, and a woman who lives several hours away whom I was able to visit while passing through her city," Hamilton says. "Both were very rewarding, sexually pleasing trysts!"

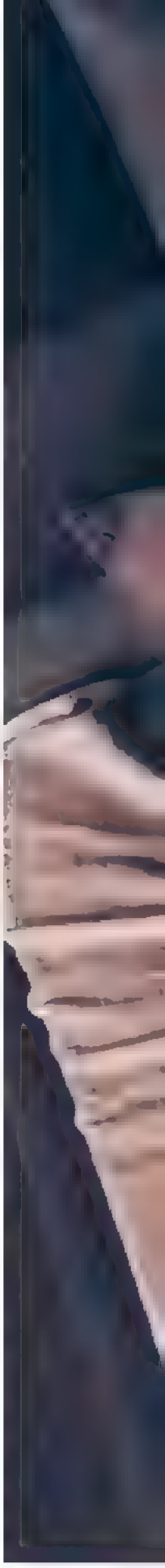
Although Hamilton says he is not concerned about giving his wife Covid, it is a risk. Cheating has always come with the hellish and humiliating worst possible outcome of giving your primary partner herpes and then having to explain how it happened Now, on top of blisters and warts, comes the risk of transmitting another viral infection and this one is potentially deadly

"Close personal contact is the main mode of Covid transmission Sex certainly falls into that category," says Dr. Alex Polyakov, a clinical epidemiologist and senior lecturer at the University of Melbourne in Australia "Barrier methods, such as condoms, while providing protection against STDs, will not be effective in stopping the spread of the Covid-19 virus. They do not prevent the exchange of nonsexual bodily fluids, such as sweat, saliva and infected aerosols exhaled by affected individuals Overall, any personal interaction puts an individual at risk of contracting the virus Sex, especially outside a monogamous relationship, would definitely increase one's risk "

So basically, kissing is more likely to give you Covid than sticking your dick in someone, although the two tend to go hand in hand

Rebecca, a 23-year-old college student from Pennsylvania, was not quarantined in farty sweatpants with her boyfriend They were one of many couples separated due to the pandemic. He went home to New Jersey and, because she is immunocompromised due to Crohn's Disease, she stayed with her parents. They visited each other roughly five times between mid-March and June While Rebecca followed strict isolation, her boyfriend saw friends and attended Black Lives Matter protests and other activities that made her proud. His activism, however, came with a side of secret pussy after reconnecting with an old friend for whom he previously had feelings Eventually, he came clean

"When I found out he was seeing her and I didn't know, I was definitely worried about exposure," Rebecca says. "He confirmed that he had been seeing people and doing things in public without informing me, which is messed up to do to anyone, but especially me because I'm high risk



and I was going against my better judgment to see him at all." They are not on good terms at the moment.

Among other things, Covid is the ultimate excuse to text your ex. Although back in "before" times, a text from an ex was a casual occurrence that one could blame on Mercury retrograde, the crushing depression of the walls closing in on you while in quarantine leaves the sexy work to the imagination. A text from an ex can lead to a nostalgic memory of banging in a pool on vacation, even if it did come with a bacterial infection. A memory turns into a sext, a sext turns into nudes and next thing you know you're saving your ex as "Aunt Diane" in your phone so your partner doesn't catch on. But what is emotional cheating, anyway?

"Would you be comfortable showing your partner your phone? If at any point you want to hide your phone, you are emotionally cheating," Richmond says. "Privacy versus secrecy—we all deserve some privacy, especially around sexuality, but if it feels like a secret then it's probably emotional cheating."

Before we burn both the physical and emotional cheaters at the stake, let's review the facts. We are living in the dystopian future we read about. Relationships are always hard, and humans are horny. Staying true to one person for the rest of your life is hard in Disney films, let alone a deadly pandemic under

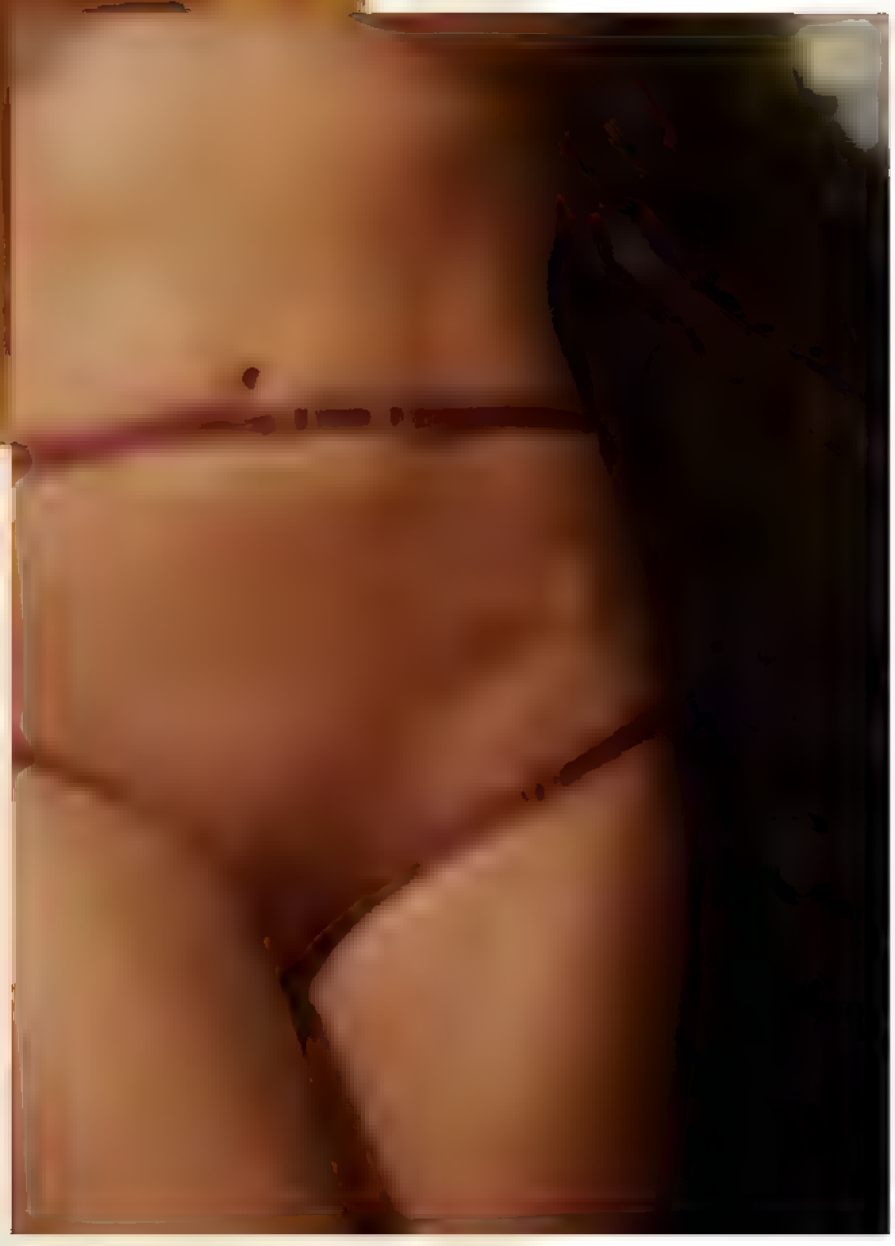
Variety is the spice of (your sex) life. It doesn't mean that you have to go full poly, but there's a valid case for trying new positions, or wearing wigs and pretending to be Russian spies.

the Trump administration. We need all the love and affection we can get. Talk to your partner. Set boundaries. Share where you're at sexually. Discuss jealousy and open relationships. Are you worried about more getting Covid or your partner deepening an emotional connection with someone else electronically? Don't be the white boy who uses a Black Lives Matter protest to pick up side pussy and expose your immunocompromised girlfriend. You can step up to the plate and get honest with yourself, and your partner, about your limits and needs. And, if you want any sort of sane guidance on pandemic safety from elected officials, please vote Trump out of office this November. Then have a threesome with your partner and a girl you met online while wearing masks to celebrate.

Some names and identifying details have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Legging: Racha
Jewels: stellar.paris
Rollers skate: Impala by racha
Bag: balmain

CLARA



Swimwear: Inamorata woman

Shoes: Gianvito Rossi

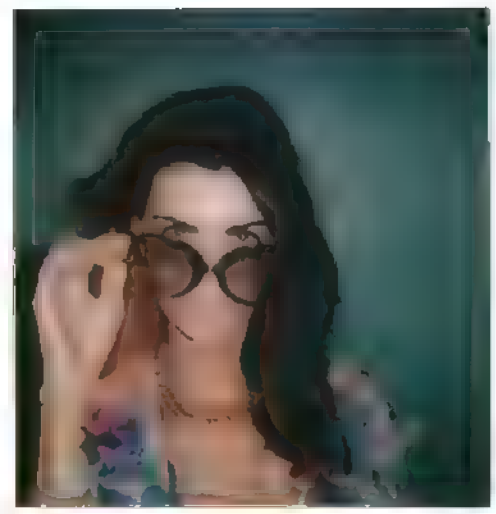
Bubble: papa bubble

Jewels: paloma casile

Swimwear: Ivy studio

Choker: Bradburry

Jewels: Stellar paris



Such an honour to have a gorgeous and talented beauty feature! We're curious to know how your journey has been as one of the most respected models in your industry.
I started with some photographer friends, my first shoot was published in a relatively well known online magazine and I thought "why not continue in this field? ". I do it for fun. I am now a model but also an influencer and work with various brands

Given your obvious stunning good looks and striking features, tell us a bit about where you're from? My name is Clara, I am 25 years old. I am French and from the west coast I have been living in Paris for 7 years now It's a city where I feel good but I need the sea, that's why I go back home a lot I like to be surrounded by my friends and family, that's what matters most to me today

Tell us something surprising about you? I'm a night owl

Have you picked up any special skills as a result of the pandemic forcing us to stay in and social distance? The pandemic was very difficult for me to deal with. I had just finished my studies in event management and was looking for a job in this field. Unfortunately it is a sector that was really affected... I played the piano for 7 years when I was younger and during these different confinements I got back to this instrument and to singing (but it is still something I keep to myself, I was often told that I had a beautiful voice but I still have trouble convincing myself.). I had the chance to travel during the second confinement in Morocco and this trip did me a lot of good..., it's a country that I love a lot ...

What are some of the things you like to do, behind the cameras and all the glitz and glamour? I like to enjoy my family, this is what is essential for me today Besides that, I am a very sociable person, who needs to meet new people and who especially does not like to live alone ! I have friends on whom I can count and with whom I like to spend time I like to party and listen to good music

If we were to try and sweep you right off your feet, what are some of the things you look for in an ideal partner? I am a lover of love.... ;) To fall in love, I need a caring boy who I can really trust, I want him to love animals like me otherwise it's dead ahaha

..And what would make you go running in the opposite direction as fast as possible? The opposite of a humble boy . I don't want boys who are not down to earth

You're a seemingly talented lady, what are some, if any, of your hidden talents not many people know about? As I said before, I've been told many times that I sing well. But it's something I find hard to put forward at the moment

What makes you feel sexy? In a relationship setting it is simply when the boy I like has really got eyes only for me. Single it's obvious that feeling desirable, feeling like I'm attractive just makes me feel sexy

If you could have any superpower in the world, what would it be and why? The power of love knowing before I even get attached to a boy if he is a good person or if he will betray me This will keep me from getting screwed when I'm madly in love

What can we expect from you this year? Any major plans and exciting things we can look forward to from you? I simply want to grow in the fashion industry, as an influencer but also in the event industry

It has been a true pleasure getting to know you! Any final words for our readers out there? We all had a tough year during this pandemic, so I just wish everyone happiness and fulfilment now.

Organization Spotlight *Community Justice Exchange*

What does a world without prisons and police look like? This organization has a vision for a community-led society that can do better

INTRODUCTION BY **TORI LYNN ADAMS**

With viewership of 13th, Ava DuVernay's 2016 documentary about the insidious rise in mass incarceration, surging by 4,665 percent in the weeks after George Floyd's death, it's clear that the Black Lives Matter protests are impacting the way the masses view our criminal justice system. But four years after the film's release, we still see rampant incarceration and injustice across the country. So the question is, What do we do to combat it? Community Justice Exchange is one of the crucial organizations working to put an end to criminalization in all its forms.

In 2016, the organization's founder and director, Pilar Weiss, launched the National Bail Fund Network, a directory of bail funds accessible to people affected by incarceration. Realizing that its initial focus solely on the bail system was too narrow, she founded Community Justice Exchange two years later to create a nationwide framework to organize and address the multifaceted issue of criminal justice reform.

"We started Community Justice Exchange in order to support grassroots groups that were working on combating detention in all its forms, including probation, parole, court fees and fines, pretrial detention, immigration detention, supervision, surveillance and, of course, bail," Weiss tells me. With 10 core team members across the country and organizations in 35 states, the group has effectively spread its resources to the individuals and organizations that need them most.

"Since March, the funds that are part of the National Bail Fund Network have paid bail and bond to free over 5,000 people."

What follows is an edited conversation between Weiss and I about the organization's challenges, triumphs and vision for a more just society.

PLAYBOY: Can you break down why mass incarceration is unjust and why there's a need to combat it?

PILAR WEISS: So many people across the country are impacted by mass incarceration—nearly half of the people in the United States have a close relative who has been incarcerated. It has profound effects on people's livelihoods and their family units. My family and my community have personally been affected by incarceration and criminalization, so it has always been top of mind for me.

PLAYBOY: In a perfect world, what would our justice system look like?

WEISS: It's an exciting time right now because folks who were not familiar with the long tradition of analysis around what it would look like to abolish the prison system are starting to become acquainted with it. We have to dismantle

this humongous system that, in many places, soaks up a significant part of city budgets so it's not going to happen overnight.

Ultimately, we should figure out new ways to address harm. We're not saying that harm is going to stop; we're saying that jails and prisons are not a way to solve it. We need to completely revise how we deal with community safety. The vision is that there are no prisons or police, and instead we reinvest in community services and resources.

PLAYBOY: What are some of the more pressing obstacles your organization faces?

WEISS: The systems we're working to dismantle are incredibly powerful, well-funded and secretive. For example, the administration keeps changing laws to make seeking asylum practically impossible and to encourage the police, Department of Homeland Security and ICE to make arrests and put people in immigration detention centers. We're working against a system that's incredibly powerful and incredibly committed to oppressing people.

PLAYBOY: What is your focus as an organization right now?

WEISS: We're working on a lot of issues related to Covid. Jails and detention centers have become hotspots for Covid, so we have been pushing for the release of people and the end of jailing people pretrial. We have had some success with that—since March, the funds that are part of the National Bail Fund Network have paid bail and bond to free over 5,000 people—but oftentimes people are released under supervision. We continue to push back on that and advocate for people truly being free. Also, a lot of courts are postponing and rescheduling their court dates because of Covid. In the past, people would be penalized or rearrested for missing their court date, so we're trying to point out that double standard and make long-term changes to penalization.

PLAYBOY: How has the legalization of cannabis in various states affected your work?

WEISS: Legalizing the use or sale of cannabis might reduce the number of people being arrested for those reasons, but that's just the first layer. The system has not dealt with the fact that there are many people in jails and prisons because of three-strikes laws or the fact that someone's past record might be affecting their life right now. There's been some work around expungement and the review of cases, but it's happening slowly.

We haven't seen a mass decrease in the jail population though, which tells us that cops who used to arrest people for marijuana possession could now be arresting people for something else. People are still being racially profiled. Traffic stops and deportation are still huge problems that affect Black and Latinx communities.

PLAYBOY: What has been a rewarding experience that has stood out during your time with CJE?

WEISS: We've often had multiple organizations come together across different states to make sure that somebody's bond is paid and that there's a plan to get them back to their family. Seeing that level of collaboration between groups that are standing up for a stranger has restored my faith in humanity. That was part of the reason we named the organization Community Justice Exchange. Oftentimes the court proceedings are "the people vs. so and so." So as a community we have to come back and say, "No, you're not going to do that in our name."

PLAYBOY: What are some actionable ways people can support your organization and your work?

WEISS: Donate. Get in touch with local organizations and volunteer. There are so many different ways to support the work; sometimes it's monetary, sometimes it's with people power and sometimes it's with folks having tough conversations with their loved ones and educating them about what is happening in the world.

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